

A  
VINDICATION  
OF THE  
Divine Authority  
AND  
INSPIRATION  
OF THE  
OLD and NEW  
TESTAMENT.

In Answer to a Treatise lately Translated out of *French*, Entitled, *Five Letters concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*,

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/By *William Lowth*, B. D. Chaplain to  
the Lord Bishop of *Winchester*.

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*The Second Edition, with Amendments, and a New Preface, wherein the Antiquity of the Pentateuch is Asserted, and Vindicated from some late Objections.*

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L O N D O N

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JONATH. EDWARDS.

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TO THE  
Right Reverend Father in God,  
**PETER,**  
Lord BISHOP  
OF  
**WINCHESTER:**  
AND  
PRELATE of the most  
Noble ORDER of  
THE  
**GARTER.**

*May it Please Your Lorship,*

**I**T is the Misfortune of our  
times to have Religion at once  
assaulted by a Rude and Igno-  
rant Profaneness, by a Confident

## *The Epistle*

pretence to reason, and by Sceptical Sophistry. Its Foundations are attack'd by the Profess'd Enemies of God and Goodness : Its Mysteries are Ridicul'd by Hereticks, as if they intended to invite Atheists to their Assistance, to joyn a Helping Hand to the Carrying on so Good a Work, as the exposing Religion, and making it appear Absurd and Contemptible. And as if it were not Task enough to Encounter Open Enemies, it hath the Hard Fate of its Blessed Author to be *Wounded in the House of its Friends*; whilst many of those who seem to Embrace it, are much more Industrious to Raise Doubts and Scruples about it, than to Establish the Fundamental Truths of it ; or else lay down such Loose Principles, that Wicked men may deduce their  
own

## *Dedictory.*

own Conclusions from them; and can't but please themselves to see their Work done to their Hands; and Christianity Undermin'd by the Imprudence or Treachery of those who Profess to believe it. Thus by degrees men have proceeded from Arguing about Obscure and Nice Matters to question Known and Certain Truths; and from Disputing about the *Points* and *Titles* of the Law, to reject the Divine Authority of the whole: from thence to Decry all Revelation, because they cannot exactly Comprehend how God's Spirit Influences and Cooperates with Man's Understanding: and at last to cast off Religion in General. So True is that which a Great Man has Observ'd. "That the Disesteem of  
"the Scriptures is the Decay of

## *The Epistle*

“ Religion, and through many  
“ Turnings and Windings at last  
“ leads Men into the very Depth  
“ of Atheism.

My Lord, The Design of the Letters which I have Undertaken to Answer, is to Perplex Men's minds with Difficulties about the *Nature of Inspiration*, and thereby render the Divine Authority of those Writings suspected, which the Church has always lookt upon as the Sacred *Depositum* of Divine Truth, which God has committed to its Trust, and Design'd for its Guide and Oracle. When first I saw this Treatise turn'd into English, I was in Hopes that some of our Eminent Divines, whose Writings are so Deservedly Admir'd for their Strength and Clearness, would have Vindicated the Authority of the Scrip-

## *Dedictory.*

Scriptures, and Clear'd their Title to Inspiration from those Difficulties with which Men that are Better at pulling down than Building up, have perplexed it. The Subject has never yet been thoroughly Handled, and is worthy the Thoughts of those Great Masters of Learning, Reason and Judgment. But after I had waited some time, and could not hear that any Abler Person intended to take this work in hand, I resolved to do my Best Endeavour toward the Defence of so Good a Cause, and give a Check to those Opinions which tend to Undermine all Revelation. And when I had finish'd my Design, there were many Considerations mov'd me to present it to your Lordship: not doubting but your Known Candor and Goodness would pardon the

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Confidence of this Address. Your  
Eminent Dignity in the Church  
makes you deservedly Esteem'd a  
Pillar of Religion and Truth ; Your  
Constant Residence in Your Dio-  
cess, and your Care and Vigilance  
to keep up the Good Orders and  
Discipline of the Church there, pre-  
serve the Purity of its Doctrine, and  
give a Due Lustre to it's Constitu-  
tion ; and your Generous and Ob-  
liging Temper Charms Men into a  
Compliance with your Good Coun-  
sel and their own Duty. And as  
these Considerations Embolden'd  
me to present this Treatise to your  
Lordship, which is writ in Vindica-  
tion of those Sacred Truths, for  
the Defence and Confirmation of  
which your Lordship is placed in  
that High Station ; So your Signal ;  
Courage in Opposing the Enthusi-  
asts



## Dedicatory.

afts of the *Late Times*, whose Vile Hypocrisy, and Lewd Pretences to Inspiration have made way for Open Profaneness and Contempt of all Reveal'd Religion, Encourages me to hope that your Lordship will favourably accept this Work, how mean soever, whose Design 'tis to put some stop to those Lasting Ill-Effects which have proceeded from such Pernicious Principles. And beside these Publick Considerations, this Work does Implore your Lordship's Protecting as being *Visitor* and *Patron* to the *College* of which the Author is a Member : who readily Embraces this Opportunity of Declaring to the World how Happy that Society esteems it self in having the Honour of your Lordships Patronage, whose Government they formerly found



*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

found to be so Great a Blessing ;  
and withal is glad of so good an  
Occasion of making this Publick  
and Grateful Acknowledgment of  
those Favours wherewith your  
Lordship has been pleased to Ob-  
lige,

My LORD,

Your Lorship's Most

Dutiful Servant,

*WILLIAM LOWTH.*

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## The Preface.

**T**He Bookseller being Encouraged to publish a New Edition of this Treatise, I was willing to improve it as much as I could, either by Correcting some Mistakes which I had committed in the Former Edition, or adding such new Observations as my Second thoughts upon this Subject could Suggest. For as I shall never be ashamed to Retract an Error, so I hope I shall make it my constant Endeavour, to grow every Day Wiser and Better.

I declar'd in my Preface to the former Edition, that I was in hopes this Imperfect Essay, might Excite some abler Pen to Engage in this Cause, which is a Subject Worthy every mans Consideration that has any regard for those Holy Truths, of which the Scriptures are the Repository. Since that time Two Treatises have been publish'd, in Defence of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, which have fully answer'd my Expectations, and given great Satisfaction to the Publick. The first writ by Mr. La Moth, Entitl'd, The Inspiration of the New Testament Asserted, which is a just and Accurate

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*curate Treatise upon the Subject. The Second consists of several Sermons Preacht at Mr. Boyle's Lecture by Dr. Williams, the now Right Reverend Bishop of Chichester: Where he has managed the Argument with that Clearness and strength of Reason, which so remarkably appears in all his Lordships Discourses and Writings, and which he has constantly employed in the Service of God and Religion, with great Honour to himself, and Benefit to others.*

*I wish these and several other Excellent Discourses, lately publisht in Defence of our Holy Religion, may have such good Effect, as to establish men in the Faith into which they were Baptized, and which 'tis to be feared many have denied, and therefore are in a worse State than mere Infidels, who never professed it. At least it might be expected, that men of Learning and Ingenuity, should duly weigh the mighty Evidence, which appears in behalf of Christianity, and compare it with the most formidable Objections that can be alledged against it: And when they are laid in the Balance with the Opposite Arguments, they will find them lighter than Vanity it self, and such as ought to be of no force with a Considering man. Since men must turn perfect Scepticks, if they will believe nothing but what is free from all Difficulties: And the*

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*the Objections which are made against the Scriptures, are chiefly such as are common to them with other Books of Antiquity, and proceed from the want of Ancient Records, and Writings that might give light to several obscure Passages: Or else they arise from the Infinite and Incomprehensible Nature of God, and consequently strike at the Foundations of Natural as well as of Revealed Religion, for God Almighty would cease to be what he is, if we could thoroughly comprehend him, and perfectly fathom his Nature and Counsels.*

*I am more inclin'd to believe, that 'tis not the force of any Objections against the Scripture, which prevails with some men of Wit and Learning to cast off their Authority, (unless they are such as love Darkness rather than Light, because there Deeds are evil, and to these we have no more to say) but the Vanity of going out of the Common Road, and being thought wiser than those that went before them.*

*But certainly to raise Difficulties against received Opinions, ought by no means to pass for the Mark of a great Genius: Forasmuch as 'tis easier to make Objections than to Answer them, it requires but little Wit, and less Judgment; and the Tryal of a Man's Abilities is seen in laying down such Principles as will bear the Test, and be the Foundation of true and useful*  
Know-

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*Knowledge. This is a Talent to which the Gentlemen we speak of seem to be utterly strangers. For upon the most Impartial Judgment I can make, I am persuaded, that none of the New Hypotheses, that have been of late advanced to weaken the Authority of Moses's or the Apostolical Writings, but are liable to much greater Exceptions and Difficulties, than the worst and most indefensible of the Old received Opinions. And that this may not be thought a Groundless, Assertion, I shall endeavour to make it out, by a Remarkable Instance.*

*Spinoza had with his usual Ignorance and Confidence asserted, <sup>a</sup> that Ezra was*  
*Polit. c. 9. Author of the Books ascribed to Moses.*

*This Error was too gross to be entertained by any, but those who, like this Author, neither understand nor care what they say, so they can but blurt out something that looks like an Objection against Religion.*

*After him comes a Writer, <sup>b</sup> supposed to be well acquainted with the Author of the*  
*Five Letters, who was of too Critical a Taste to take up with so Absurd an Opinion: But being too Ambitious of the Honour of making Discoveries, or advancing those that others have made, or from whencesoever it proceeds, being, as it seems, not well satisfied with the Common Opinion, that Moses was the Author of the Pentateuch, tries to improve upon Spinoza, and proposes another Conjecture, which*

*b Sentiments de  
Theologi.  
ens'd Hol-  
lande Let-  
tre 6. p.  
129.*

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which I dare say was purely his own Invention: And as no body can pretend to have gone before him in it, so I believe few that consider any thing, will venture to follow him. His Conjecture is this, "That the Pentateuch was put into its present Form, by that Samaritan Priest whom the King of Assyria sent into the land of Israel, to instruct the New Colonies which he had planted there, in the Room of the Ten Tribes, which were carried Captive by him into Assyria: which Story is related at large, 2 Kings 17. 24, &c. Now if you ask this Gentleman where he Learnt this, he scorns to be beholden to any ancient Author for it: This is to take things Blindly upon Trust from others, which he thinks an Unreasonable Imposition upon Mankind. But for my part, since I must believe some things upon the Credit of other men's Testimony, I had rather rely upon the Authority of all Antiquity, both Jewish & Heathen, who have unanimously ascribed the Pentateuch to Moses, than believe it the Work of an Obscure Idolatrous Priest, meerly because this Gentleman passes his word for it.

Indeed he very shrewdly infers <sup>c</sup> from <sup>c</sup> Ibid. p. Gen. 2. 12. and some other Passages in 107. the Pentateuch, that the Author of those Books must needs have travel'd Eastward of Judea, which Moses never did. But  
if



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if we should put him in mind that Moses was very well versed in the History of the World, as appears by the Account which he gives of its first Peopling, of the Antiquity of several Cities, and of the Wars that had been in former Ages: From whence it may be concluded that he was able to give an Account of the Nature and Product of Foreign Countries, without being supposed to have travell'd thither: I say, if we should make such a Reply to the only Reason this Author assigns of his New Assertion, he hath nothing further to say in its behalf, but only that he supposes it a Probable Conjecture.

But that it is not so much as a Probable, or barely Precarious Opinion, but on the Contrary highly Absurd and Irrational, I proceed briefly to shew. In order to which I will take a short Review of this New Hypothesis: viz. That the Samaritan Priest who was sent to instruct the Assyrian Colonies in the manner how the God of Israel was to be Worshipped, having accidentally lit upon a Transcript of that Copy of the Law, which was found in the Temple in Josiah's time, and met with some other Ancient memories, out of these Compiled the Pentateuch for the Instruction of his Assyrian Converts.

The Absurdity of this Opinion I shall prove,

I. By



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1. By shewing its Inconsistency with it self, and its Contradicting all the History of those times.

2. By bringing Positive Proofs, that the Pentateuch is Older than those times in which this Author supposes it to have been writ.

To make this appear, let us consider the Distance of time, Between the ransplanting the Assyrian Colonies into the Land of Israel, and the finding that Copy of the Law of the Temple. We may suppose with as much Probability as is in any of this Gentleman's Conjectures, that this New Plantation was begun immediately upon the Carrying of the Ten Tribes Captive into Assyria, and to make Room for them there. Now 'tis plain by express words of the Sacred Story, that the Captivity of Israel, happen'd in the Ninth Year of King Hoseah, <sup>b</sup> which was the Sixth Year of King Hezekiah. But the Book of the Law was not found till the Eighteenth Year of Josiah, which was no less than Ninety-Seven Years afterwards, as may be easily computed. For Hezekiah Reigned Twenty three Years <sup>b</sup> after the Captivity of the Ten Tribes. Manasseh Reigned Fifty five <sup>k</sup> Years: Amon reign'd Two Years, to which we must add Seventeen Years complet of Josiah's Reign, after which time the Book of the Law was found. <sup>n</sup> So this

<sup>b</sup> 2 King. 17. 6. and 18. 10, 11.  
<sup>i</sup> compare 2 King. 18. 2 with vers. 10.  
<sup>k</sup> 2 K. 21. same ch.  
<sup>l</sup> lb. vers. 19.  
<sup>m</sup> 2 King. 22. 3. 8.  
<sup>n</sup> 23. 55.  
 Priest 2. 17.

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*Priest, who must be a middle aged Man before the Captivity, or else he would not have bin Experienced in the way of God's Worship, returns into his own Country almost an Hundred Years afterwards, and compiles the Pentateuch for the Instruction of his Converts. Now I challenge any Man to shew me any thing half so Incoherent as this Story, in admitting Moses to be the Author of every syllable in the five Books ascribed to him: nay, tho' we suppose him to have writ the History of his own Death and Burial.*

*However, I will try to help our Author out a little, and grant him a Favour, which he does not seem sensible that he needs, and what if I should allow, and let him make the best of it, that this Colony of Assyrians was not planted in the Land of Israel till Esarhaddon's time: who seems to have made a Final Deportation of the Ten Tribes, by carrying away the Remnant which Shalmaneser left, and planting a Colony of his own Subjects in their Room. Upon which account they date their own settlement in the Country of the Ten Tribes from ° Esarhaddon's Days. Which Settlement of theirs*

o Ezr. 4. 2.

p Annal.

V. L.

q Isa. 7. 8.

*Bishop Usher, from the Authority of the Prophet ° Isaiah, placeth in the Two and Twentieth Year of Manasses, about Forty five Years after the Captivity of the Ten Tribes.*

But

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But even this Concession will not mend the matter much, for still the Settlement of this New Plantation will be Older by Fifty two Years than the Discovery of the Book of the Law. And it cannot easily be imagin'd that a Man who left his Country at about Thirty Years of Age, as this Priest must be supposed to have been, or near it, should be sent again thither above Fifty Years after, upon so tedious a Journey, and to undertake so difficult a work as the instructing a people in a New Religion: and that just upon his Undertaking that Employment, he should so luckily meet with a Copy of the Ancient Law, which at that time was a Rarity even in Jerusalem, and seems never to have been seen by the High-Priest himself, till he casually found it in the Temple.

But in the Second place, I would be glad to hear from this Gentleman, who has so peculiar a Talent in making Objections against received Opinions, a Clear Answer to this Difficulty which may be raised against his New one: viz. How it came to pass that a Book writ under these Circumstances should ever obtain such an Authority as the Pentateuch has met with, and be lookt upon as the most sacred part of the Jewish Scriptures? If we will believe him, it was writ by a mean Obscure Person, never so much as suspected to be the Author of it, till this Gentleman

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was pleased to bring him upon the Stage. It was writ for the use of a People whom the Jews always hated, as intruders into the Land of Promise, and scorn'd, as Aliens from God's Covenant. They would never have any Commerce with them: When they offer'd them their Service and Assistance in Rebuilding the Temple, they refused to accept of it; nor ever after would the Jews have any dealings with the Samaritans. And these were not behind hand with them in the same sort of Treatment: For they rejected the Prophetical Writings, because they would not receive any part of their Scripture Canon from the Jews their Enemies. Is it likely then that the Jews would receive the most Sacred Books of their Scripture Code, from the hands of those whom they lookt upon as worse than Infidels? As appears by the Character the Son of Syrach gives them, *Ecclus. 50. 26.* a more contemptible one, than that which he bestows upon the Philistines.

Perhaps I have spent too much time, in Confuting this Groundless Fancy, but I thought it might be of some Use to shew by this one Instance, into what Absurdities an Itch of Contradicting Received Opinions, and setting up for New Discoveries will betray men, who are otherwise Persons of Learning and judgment.

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*The following Consideration I hope may be of General Use, to Silence the Cavils of Sceptical men against the Authority and Genuineness of the Books of Moses, which must needs appear Weak and Trifling, when compared with the Positive Proofs of the Antiquity of the Pentateuch, which are to be found in the most Ancient Scripture Writings, and such as come nearest the times of Moses himself : Which was the second thing I undertook to make out, in Opposition to some that are willing to believe the Books of Moses of a much later Date.*

*And here to prevent all Wrangling, I shall avoid mentioning any of those Testimonies, which might be alledged to prove the Antiquity of the Book of Deuteronomy. Because several of those who question whether Moses be the Author of the other Four Books, allow him to have writ this, or at least the Collection of the Laws contained in it, which is much the greatest part of it : And suppose this alone to be the Book of the Law mentioned in Deuteronomy it self, and in other places of Scripture, as they think may appear by comparing Deut. 27. 1, &c. with Josh. 8. 30, &c.*

*But that the rest of the Pentateuch is of equal Antiquity with Deuteronomy, or rather was written before it, may be gather'd from several places in that Book*

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itself, which referr to the Histories related in Genesis and Exodus: As I think will Evidently appear to any one that compares Deut. 25. 19. with Exod. 17. 14. and Deut. 29. 23. with Gen. 19. 24, 25. and considers the following Instances taken out of other Ancient Scripture Writers.

And the first Author I shall alledge is King David, who is not only the most Eminent, but one of the most Ancient Writers we have next Moses. He was very Zealous in restoring the Ark to its due place, and renewing the daily Service; both which he did according as the Law of Moses had commanded, as the Text expressly observes. Which words do not only referr to the Laws mention'd, Exod. 25. 14, 15. and Ch. 29. 39. but they likewise suppose King David well acquainted with the Laws relating to the Tabernacle, and God's service to be perform'd there, which are related at large, Exod. 25. and the following Chapters: And he had a particular Regard for them, as looking upon them to be written by Moses himself, from the Mouth of God.

But further we may observe that several Phrases in David's, Psalms, are borrowed from places in Genesis and Exodus: A plain Evidence that those Books were then the very same as to Phrase and Expression they now are. For Proof

u 1.  
Chron.  
15. 15.  
and ch.  
16. 40.



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of this I desire the Reader will compare these following places in the Psalms ascribed to David, with the Parallel Texts in the Writings of Moses.

Psal. 24. 1. The Earth is the Lord's; Compared with Exod. 9. 29.

Psal. 33. which hath not indeed the Name of David in its Title, but must be his, or as old as his time, because it is in the first Collection that was made of his Psalms. Here v. 9. we find this Expression, He spake and it was done; which plainly alludes to the History of the Creation, Gen. 1. 3. &c.

Psal. 60. 7. Judah is my Law-giver, מחקקי: The very word in Jacob's Prophecy concerning that Tribe, Gen. 49.

10. Which Psalm is ascribed to David by St. Paul, Heb. 4. 7. Psal. 95. 8. As in the Provocation, in the day of temptation. כמריבה כיום מסה. a manifest Allusion to Exod. 17. 7.

Psal. 103. 7, 8. He shewed his ways unto Moses, The Lord is רדכיו \* merciful and Gracious, &c. A plain יוריע. Quotation of Exod. 24. 6. referring to Moses's Petition concerning this Matter.

Psal. 110. 4. Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchizedeck, plainly referring to the History of Melchizedeck, Gen. 14.

To these Instances we may add those Historical Reflections upon the Deliverance Exod. 23. 13. Shew me thy way. out of Egypt, and the peoples behaviour in the



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*the Wildernes, which are the entire Subject of several Psalms, that are certainly Ancient, though we cannot precisely determine the time when they were written: Such are Psal. 78. 105, 106. 135.*

*Many other Instances might be produced, but I think these sufficient to satisfy any unprejudic'd man, that David and the other Psalmists that lived in or near his time, had the same Pentateuch by them, which we have at this Day.*

*Solomon succeeds David, to whom God made this Promise, that he would put  
 y 2 Kings 21. 7, 8. his Name for ever in the House  
 2 Chron. 33. 7, 8. which he had built: Provided he and his  
 People would be carefull to observe the whole Law of Moses. Accordingly he was well acquainted with the Writings of Moses, as appears by his own Works, where there are plain Allusions to those Books of the Pentateuch, the Antiquity and Genuineness whereof are now a Days question'd. This will appear by the following Instances.*

*Prov. 3. 18. Wisdom is a Tree of Life, עץ חיים, the words in Gen. 2. 9. Ibid. vers. 20. The Depths are Broken up; an Allusion to the History of the Deluge, where the same Phrase is used Gen. 7. 11.*

*Whosoever desires to see further Proof of this Matter, I shall referr him to Prov. 8. 27. Compared with Gen. 1. 2.*

*Eccl.*

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Eccl. 12. 7. *with* Gen. 3. 19. Cantic. 6. 13. As it were the Company of two Armies, or rather, the Company of Mahanaim : *i. e.* Gods Host which Jacob saw, Gen. 32. 1. From whence he named the place Mahanaim. ch. 7. 10. His desire is toward me, *with* Gen. 3. 16.

I shall conclude my proof of this Point with some Instances taken out of the most Ancient Prophets, who lived a great while before the Date of the Pentateuch, if we will believe some late Authors, and yet plainly allude to several Passages in it.

Jonah seems to have been the Ancientest of all the Prophets, who have left their Prophecies in Writing : And he plainly alludes<sup>r</sup> to the Above-cited Text, Exod. 7 ch. 4. 2. 34. 6. I knew, saith he, *i. e.* from thy own Declaration, that thou art a gracious God, &c.

Hoseah is next in Order of Antiquity, in the Twelfth Chapt. of whose Prophecy, Vers. Third and Fourth, there are plain Allusions to the History of Jacob, as 'tis recorded in Genesis, and part of the Fourth Vers. is taken word for word out of Gen. 32. 28.

I shall Instance but in one Prophet more, and that is Isaiah : and the Allusions he makes to the Histories recorded in the Pentateuch are Innumerable, the most Remarkable of which I shall take notice of.

Isa.

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*Isa. 4. 5. A Cloud and Smoke by Day, and the shining of a flaming Fire by Night : Words plainly borrowed from Moses. Exod. 13. 22. and design'd by the Prophet to express God's Presence with, and Protection of his Church, of which the Pillar in the Wilderness was an Embleme.*

*Isa. 24. 18. The windows from on high are opened, and the Foundations of the Earth do shake. The former part of the verse is a plain Allusion<sup>a</sup> to Gen. 7. 11. where the Deluge is thus described, The Windows of Heaven were opened, and the Foundations of the great Deep broke up. Which Description with very little variation the Prophet applies to the Final Dissolution of the present World at the last Day, which might fitly be resembled to the Deluge that brought Destruction upon the Old World.*

*Isa. 54. 9. is evidently taken out of Gen. 9. 11. Besides there are multitudes of Texts in this Prophecy, which allude to the Deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and their Passage through the Wilderness: All which have a manifest Reference to the History of those Transactions recorded by Moses, as will appear to any one that will be at the pains to compare the following Passages of this Prophecy, with the Parallel places in that History.*

Itai.

צרכו  
בעתו

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Isai. 11. 15, 16. with Exod. 14. 22.  
29. Isai. 43. 16. and ch. 51. 10. *Allude to the same place.*

Isa. 48. 21. with Exod. 17. 6. and  
Num. 20. 11. -50. 2. with Exod. 7. 18.  
21 59. 1. with Numb. 11. 23. -63. 9.  
The Angel of his Presence, taken  
from Exod. 23. 20, 21.

*Ib. vers. 11, 12, 13. taken from  
Exod. 14. These and several other places  
which might be alledged, manifestly  
alluded to the History recorded by Moses,  
which the Prophet refers to as universally  
known and received by the Jews, and  
lookt upon as the Evidence of their being  
in Covenant with God, and the Founda-  
tion of their Trust in him.*

*These frequent Allusions to the Records  
of those Transactions, and the Prophets  
Appeal, To the Law and to the Testi-  
mony, are certain Signs that the Books  
of Moses were then in every ones Hand:  
And I question not but they continued to be  
so, till Manasseh's time, whose long and  
Wicked Reign destroy'd the very Face of  
the true Religion, and was the occa-  
sion that a Copy of the Law was a Rarity  
in the times succeeding.*

*I am persuaded that the Rules of Cri-  
ticism can't supply us with better Proofs  
of the Genuineness of any Approved Author,  
than these which I have alledged, being Al-  
lusions to several places, scattered up and  
down*

*b Isai. 8.  
20.*

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down in those Writings, are to convince us that the Pentateuch was the same Book, and in the same Esteem among the Jews, in the times of David, Solomon, and the Prophets, which it has at this Day : And being the Foundation of the Jewish Religion and Polity, can be the work of none but their Legislator himself.

Thus far I have considered an Objection advanced against the Authority of Moses's Writings, without any Ground or Pretence to support it : Nay in Contradiction to History, and the most Ancient Writings of the Old Testament. And now who can chuse but admire at the Hardiness of this Gentleman, who has the Confidence to set up a Precarious and absurd Conjecture against the Authority of those Books, which all Ancient Authors, both Jews and Gentiles, have always ascribed to Moses, and Christ and his Apostles have confirm'd the same with their own Testimony ? Methinks 'twere e'en as good to go on in the Old beaten track, and tread in the Steps of our dull Forefathers, as to vent such Crude and Indigested Notions as these : And as Tully said in relation to some things in Epicurus's Hypothesis, *Hoc dicere turpius est quam id quod velis non posse defendere*, 'twere more Honourable, fairly to give up the Cause of Infidelity and Scepticism, than to maintain it by such Weak and Contemptible Arguments.

And

c Nat. De-  
pr. l. i.

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*And here I should put an End to this Preface, but that I find a late Author <sup>d</sup> d The hath called in Question the Authority of Reasona- a great part of the New Testament, chiefly bleness of upon the Strength of some Objections, Christia- which I hoped I had sufficiently answered nity as de- in the Following Book, before his Treatise liver'd in the Scrip- came abroad. I shall therefore briefly consider what he says of those Heads which are treated upon in the following Discourse, without engaging to answer his whole Book, which is already done to my Hands in an Excellent Treatise lately Printed at Oxford, upon that Subject.*

*This Author maintains, that the Epistles are not of equal Authority with the Gospels, nor to be Appealed to for the Explaining the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith. This he Attempts to prove by Two Arguments, which I had consider'd in my Book, and endeavour'd to obviate any Doubts that might be drawn from them.*

*I confess it would be a great Presumption in me to expect that an Author of his Rank, and one that values himself for writing altogether out of his own Stock, should stoop so low as to consult my Book. However it might be expected that a person of such a Comprehensive Genius, should make it appear, that he has consider'd his Subject on all sides, and weigh'd every Argument that can make for, or against*

*bi*



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*his Opinion. And therefore it might be a prudent piece of Caution to consult any Discourse that is Written upon the same Subject, because be the Performance never so mean, yet it may Suggest something to the most searching Wit which had escap'd his Observation. This, I doubt, is the very Case of this Author, as will appear by considering his Two Objections.*

§ 299. *The first whereof* is, "That the  
2 d. Edi. "Discourses contained in the Gospels  
"and Acts were design'd to instruct  
"men in the Fundamentals, of Chri-  
"stianity : Whereas the Epistles were  
"writ to those who were in the Faith,  
"and true Christians already, and so  
"could not be design'd to teach them  
"the Fundamental Articles, and  
"Points necessary to Salvation.

f p. 63. *This Point I handled* at large, and  
§ c. 1st. *shew'd how useful the Epistles were as an*  
Ed. p. 64. *Authentick Commentary upon the Gospels,*  
of this Ed. *and a fuller Explication of some Important Doctrines of Christianity, concerning which our Saviour did not think fit to instruct his Disciples so perfectly during his Abode upon Earth. To what has been there said I shall only add this Remark, That we find it a difficult matter to persuade some men, and I fear this Writer is one of them, of the Truth of the Principal Articles of our Faith, though they are over and over deliver'd in Scripture:*  
*Which*



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*Which shews how necessary it is that Important Truths should be frequently repeated, and in a different set of Expressions too, that if one Phrase be liable to Ambiguity, another may give light to it, and put that matter out of Question. For Instance, I doubt not but the Doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is delivered in the Gospels, and that in plain and express words. But the Obstinacy of those that deny, this Article convinceth us how necessary 'tis that this Doctrin should be again insisted upon in the Epistles, and deliver'd there in other words and Expressions, in order to the Silencing Gain-sayers, or leaving them without Excuse. For they that deny this Doctrin, when the whole Epistle to the Hebrews is writ on purpose to prove it, would have had much more to say for themselves, if the Proofs for this Point had been to be found only in the Gospels.*

*His Second Argument against the Authority of the Epistles is, that "They p. 298.  
"were writ upon particular Occasions  
"and without those Occasions had  
"not been writ, and so can't be  
"thought necessary to Salvation. The  
force of this Argument I had likewise consider'd at the Latter End of my First Chapter, and shewed that as Providence often makes small, and seemingly Inconsiderable Circumstances, subservient in bringing about the greatest Events, so it  
might*

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might improve particular Occasions to the General Benefit of the Church. This I proved from the Prophecies of the Old Testament, which have been esteem'd of General Use by all that have owned any such thing as Revelation, though they were writ with a particular Regard to the Circumstances of those times, wherein the Prophets lived. The same might be said of the Book of Psalms, most of which were writ upon particular Occasions; notwithstanding which they have been esteem'd the Store-house of Devotion, both by Jews and Christians, and have always been a Considerable part of their Publick Worship. And indeed the whole Canon of Scripture consists of Books written by Authors that lived at different times, and wrote upon different Occasions. So that their making up one Rule of Faith seems rather an act of God's Providence than of Man's Intention. And this very consideration in my Judgment, is of it self an Argument for the Authority of the Scripture Canon: Because from hence it appears, that the Religion which is contained in it, could not be a peice of Humane Contrivance, since the Authors of these Writings could never combine together in carrying on such a Design. And since they lived at such a Distance from each other, and were men of different Educations and ways of Life, the Agreement which is found

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which is found among them, ought in all Reason to be ascribed to the Directions of that one and the same Spirit, by which they Writ.

These Considerations I think, are sufficient to satisfy this Gentleman's objection, taken from the Occasional Writing of the Epistles, allowing the Objection it self to be true: Which yet I must tell him, will not hold as to several Epistles, as the Author of the *Animadversions* hath *g* p. 38. clearly proved.

But still the Author of the Reasonableness &c. urges <sup>*h*</sup> that "in the Epistles <sup>*b*</sup> p. 298. and Vin-  
"the Fundamental Articles are Pro-<sup>*dic.*</sup> p. 14.  
"miscuously, and without Distincti-  
"on mixt with other Truths. As if  
this Argument did not hold as well against  
the Gospels and the Acts: Certainly 'tis  
more likely that things of a Foreign Na-  
ture should be interwoven with Fundamen-  
tals in Historical tracts, than in those that  
are purely Doctrinal. I would gladly  
know where our Author will find either  
in the Gospels or Acts any one Chapter  
that consists purely of Fundamental Do-  
ctrines. This was supplied by the Compos-  
ing of those Formularies of Faith which  
are commonly called Creeds, which  
are nothing but a Summary of the Fun-  
damental Points of Faith collected in-  
to one Body out of the Scriptures.  
These were used from the very beginning  
c of

## The Preface.

of Christianity, and 'tis very probable that one or more such Forms (differing a little in words, but agreeing in sense) were deliver'd by the Apostles to their Disciples, in order to, or immediately upon their Baptism.

: See 1.

Tim. 6.

2o. 2 Tim.

1. 13, 14.

Our Author takes a Wrong Method to discover Fundamentals, which are not to be judged of barely by the Books wherein they are found, but rather by the necessary Connexion which some Articles of Faith have with the Method whereby our Redemption was Accomplisht, as being either Essential to the Explaining the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation, or such as follow from thence by direct and immediate Consequence. Upon this account we and the Socinians can never agree what Doctrines are to be Esteem'd Fundamentals, because we do not agree in our Notions about man's Redemption, and by what means it was accomplished. They only suppose that God caused a Holy man to be born of a Virgin, that he might Revel God's will to Mankind, might lay down his Life in Testimony to the Truth of what he preach'd, and then might be advanced by God to great Power in Heaven, by which he saves his Faithful Servants. Whereas the Catholick Church has always Explain'd the Notion of Man's Redemption to this Effect: That all men were fallen from God's Favour, and Objects of his wrath; That God out  
of

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of Love to lost Mankind sent his Only begotten Son into the World, not only to Reveal Gods will to Men, but likewise to Die for their Sins, and thereby reconcile them to God; That after his Resurrection he took possession of his Mediatory Kingdom, as a Reward of his Sufferings, and now saves Men by the Meritorious Efficacy of his Sacrifice and Intercession. From this short Representation of these two Hypotheses, it appears that they do indeed constitute two different Religions: for there is as great a difference between them, as there is between a Religion with a Sacrifice, and one that hath none: they set forth two different Saviours, the former describes him as one that saves men by his Holy Doctrine and Sovereign Power; the Latter maintains that he saves them by making reconciliation for their sins, through his Sufferings and Intercession. And as these two Systems differ in the very Notion of a Saviour, so according to their different Principles they quite alter the Measures of our Obedience, and the Obligations of our Duty: For the Socinian Hypothesis renders the Worship and Service due to our Saviour, our Dependance upon him and Trust in him, Absurd and Impracticable, since these are Religious Acts that can't be terminated upon a Creature: It makes perfectly Void those Powerful Motives of Obedience which are taken

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*from the Love, Humility and Condescension of our Lord, and the Right that he hath to our Service, as having Purchased us with the Price of his Blood, so that if the Catholick Notion of Men's Redemption be true, (and 'tis Grounded upon the Clearest words of Scripture, and the concurring Sense and Interpretation of the main Body of Christians) I say, if that be true, Socinianism is no better than Preaching another Gospel, and believing in another Jesus.*

*I thought not improper to explain briefly the Nature of Fundamental Articles, because 'tis the great Design of the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity to reduce the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion to one Article, viz. that Jesus is the Messias: Which though it be a Fundamental Truth, and necessary to be insisted upon in the first place by those whose chief business 'twas to convert the Jews: yet I conceive 'tis not of it self sufficient to explain the whole Counsel of God in the Work of Man's Redemption.*

*I shall conclude with making this one Remark, concerning the many Attempts that have of late been made to lessen the Authority of the Scripture, or at least to reduce it into a Narrower Compass: viz. That the most Natural-Interpretation we can put upon such a Design is, that the Abettors of it are willing to be as little be-*



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beholden as is possible, to Christ and his Apostles. And tho they look upon the Christian Religion as too well grounded to be wholly discarded, yet they are of Opinion that the less we have of Revelation the better, and that Mankind do not stand much in need of it. Thus Ungrateful men require God Almighty for the Stupendious expressions of his Love in sending his Son into the World, that we might live through him: and despise the Kindness of a Dying Saviour because they will not be persuaded they stand in need of it. Such men have just reason to fear least God should utterly deprive them of the means of Grace, as a Punishment of their Ingratitude, and deliver them up to the Blackness of Darknes and Error, who are resolved in a Contemptuous manner to shut their Eyes against the Glorious Light of the Gospel.

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Pag. 41. in the Marg. read, *Tit. i. 5.* and  
*Chap. 3. 12.* p. 67. A mistake in the Num-  
bring, for p. 65. which Mistake is continued  
in the following Numbers. p. 89. l. 15. r. *Spi-*  
*rits.* p. 90. Marg. r. and in *Iren. Differs.* 2. n.  
26. p. 91. l. 19. r. *opportunity.* p. 115. at the  
bottom of the Margin, r. *interpolatum.* p. 121.  
Marg. r. *Rom. 12. 6.* 1 *Cor. 14. 1.* p. 138. l.  
17. After *by and by*, make a full Stop. the  
next three Lines should be a Marginal Note. p.  
148. l. 2. for *two* r. *too.* and l. 10. for *one*, r.  
*on.* p. 179. Marg. for G. r. C. p. 233. Marg.  
for *28. r. 2.* p. 242. l. 21. r. *דברת* l. 26. blot  
out, *bis.* p. 254. l. 4. for *4. r. 4th.* l. 27. after *so*  
*soon*, make a full stop.

Ad-

*Addenda ad page 46. line 3.*

**T**Hat this was, the Sense of the Ancient Church will further appear from that Canon, made in favor of the Concubines of Unbelievers, which we find in the *Constitutions* <sup>a</sup> falsely called *Apostolical*, but yet consisting of such Usages as were generally received in the *Fourth Century*, and several of them sooner. The Canon is as followeth, Παλλακή τινος ἀπίστου δε-  
λη ἐκείνῳ μὲν ὡς ὁ δαζουσα προσδεχέτω. *Con-*  
*cubina cujuspiam infidelis mancipium, illi*  
*soli dedita admittatur.* 'Tis certain no Church would have been so favourable to any that were Concubines to such as profess'd themselves Christians: But they thought the Case Different  
*b* de Fide as to such as were under the Power of and Ope- Heathen Masters. The words of St. <sup>b</sup>  
*rib. c. 19.* *Austin* concerning the same matters, are not quite so positive as those in the *Constitutions*, but yet 'tis plain he was inclin'd to be of the favourable side. *De Concubina si professa fuerit nullum se alium cognituram, etiamsi ab illo cui subdita est dimittatur, merito dubitabitur, utrum ad percipiendum Baptismum non debeat ad-*  
*mitti.*



## CHAPTER. I.

*General Considerations concerning the  
Inspiration of the Writings of the  
New Testament.*

I Do not dislike our Author's  
 Division of the Scripture-<sup>a French</sup>  
 Writings into *Prophecies, Histo-* Edit.  
*ries and Doctrines:* and I do so <sup>p. 222.</sup>  
 far agree with him, as to grant that <sup>English,</sup>  
 all the Holy Books have not an <sup>p. 13.</sup>  
 equal degree of Inspiration, but have  
 more or less of it, according as the  
 matters they contain are more or less  
 Adequate to the Writers Understanding  
 and Capacities. For I cannot  
 but think that God made use of  
 their Natural Talents as far as they  
 could be subservient to his designs,  
 the Reasons of which Opinion I shall  
 have occasion hereafter to mention.  
 But yet, notwithstanding my agree-  
 ment with him thus far, I must de-  
 sire leave not to follow his Method,  
 because I think 'twill contribute much  
 to the Clearness and Strength of the  
 following Discourse, if I treat of the  
 Inspiration of the *New-Testament-Wri-*  
 A *tings*

*tings in General*, in the first place. For in this Method we begin with what is most Known and Certain, and from thence proceed to explain what is more Doubtful and Obscure. And if the Divine Authority of the Writings of the New Testament be once proved, that of the Old must follow as a necessary Consequence; because the former gives Testimony to the latter, and most of the Arguments which prove the one, may be easily applied to the other.

Mr. N. allows the *Histories of the New Testament to be exact and true Relations of the matter of Fact*, but supposes that there's no need of Inspiration to Write a true History <sup>b</sup>. He grants likewise that the Apostolical Epistles contain nothing but what is conformable to the Doctrine of Christ, but yet that the Apostles had no need of an extraordinary Inspiration for Writing their Epistles <sup>c</sup>. But all this while he takes no notice that these Writings were design'd by God for the Perpetual Use and Instruction of the Church, and to be a Rule of Christian Faith to all Ages. Which one thing if it be made out, will prove their Divine Original, and sufficiently distinguish them for all other Writings, purely Humane, where Providence cannot be supposed to have had such an extraordinary Hand in the

Com-

<sup>b</sup> Fr. p.  
231, &c.  
Engl. p.  
28. &c.

<sup>c</sup> Fr. p.  
282, 283.  
Eng. p.  
112, 113.

Composure: since it neither can be pretended that the Authors were the *Immediate Instruments* of God in publishing his Will, nor that their Works were design'd for so general a Use, as the Instruction of the Universal Church.

I shall therefore in the first place give a definition of an *Inspir'd Writing*, and then prove that the Writings of the New Testament are truly such. *An inspir'd Writing I take to be a Book that is writ by the Incitation, Direction and Assistance of God, and design'd by him for the Perpetual use of the Church.*

The Proof of the Inspiration of the *New Testament-Writings*, I shall comprise in these following Propositions.

I. God design'd to provide a means for the preserving the Doctrine of Christ to the end of the World.

II. This could not be done so well in any Ordinary way or Humane means, as by committing this Doctrine to Writing.

III. 'Tis more reasonable to suppose that God would make use of this way than any other, because he made use of the same means before, for the Instruction of the Jewish Church.

IV. He has actually made use of no other way for the conveying down the Christian Doctrine, that can be assign'd.

V. The Apostles themselves design'd their

*their Writings for the Perpetual use of the Church, and lookt upon them of equal Authority in the Christian Church, as the Writings of the Old Testament were in the Jewish.*

VI. *The Age immediately after the Apostles lookt upon the Writings of the New-Testament, as the standing Rule of Faith to the Christian Church.*

I think the making out these Propositions, (some of which need very little proof) will fully prove the Divine Authority of the Books contain'd in the Canon of the New Testament: and when they are made out, such Consequences may be drawn from them, as will silence most of the Cavils and Objections, which the *Author of these Letters* and some others have rais'd against the Inspiration of the Scripture.

I. The first Proposition to be prov'd is this: *God design'd to provide a means for the preserving the Doctrine of Christ, to the end of the World.*

This Proposition I think any Christian will take for granted: and my design at present is not to dispute with *Infidels*, but to lay down those Principles upon which the Divine Authority of the Scriptures is built, the truth of Christianity being presuppos'd: because the Author I am to deal with

with professes the Belief of Christianity, and yet has raised Objections against a great many of those Writings, which Christians have all along lookt upon to be of Divine Authority. I say therefore that no Christian can doubt of the truth of this Proposition: for every Christian believes the Gospel to be the last and most perfect Revelation of the Will of God which he intends to afford to the World: he believes that *Christ will be with his Church to the end of the World, and that* Mat. 28.  
*the gates of Hell shall not prevail against* 20---16.  
*it: i. e. it shall never be so far weak-* 18.  
 ned, as that the Profession of Christianity should cease, or the Church be perfectly deprived of the Knowledge of saving Truth. Nothing further being needful for the illustrating this Proposition, I proceed to the

II. Proposition. *The Knowledge of Christianity could not be preserved in an Ordinary way, or by any Humane means so well, as by conveying the Doctrine of it to after Ages by Writing.*

I do not pretend to prescribe to God Almighty what method he shall use to discover his Will to the World, or confine him to any one way of doing it: but thus much I think I may safely say, that a *standing Rule of Faith* committed to Writing is liable to less

inconveniences and difficulties, than any other way of conveying down Divine Truth. Whereas all other ways that can be assign'd of transmitting Divine Revelation are incumbred with so many difficulties, that without a constant series of Miracles, they can never attain their end. And therefore we can't reasonably suppose that God will make Choice of any such methods to Reveal his Will by. For this is to be laid down for a certain truth, that *God never works more Miracles than needs must*, nor ever suspends or overbears the force of natural Agents without evident necessity, but always uses second Causes and Humane means as far as they will go. And therefore that method which offers least violence to nature, is more likely to be made choice of by God. Some Men indeed are apt to think that the Hand of God can't shew it self without a constant series of Miracles: but they that consider things more exactly, rather judge that a continued succession of Miracles would really be a reproach to God's Ordinary Providence: for often to interrupt the course of Nature, must needs be a reflection upon the Wisdom that first contrived it. We can imagine but two ways of God's Communicating his Will



Will to several successive Ages without the help of Writing; either *Oral Tradition*, or making a *Particular Revelation* to every single Person, or at least to all those whose business 'tis to teach and instruct others in their Duty. Now both these ways are liable to such difficulties, and do suppose so many immediate interpositions of God's Power to prevent those errors which must of necessity attend them, (considering the present state of Humane Nature) as are not suitable to the methods which God uses in Governing the World. I shall not pursue this matter any further, nor give a particular account of the inconveniencies to which both these Methods are obnoxious, and to correct which a constant Interposition of Miracles will be necessary. The Absurdity of the former has been abundantly demonstrated by the Learned Defenders of the *Protestant Resolution of Faith*, against those Popish Writers that set up Tradition in Opposition to it: and the Absurdity of the latter is evident at first sight, and none but meer Enthusiasts ever made any Pretence to it. But on the other side, for God to communicate his Will by Writing, implies nothing in it but what is Natural and Easie: there is nothing requisite

e A. B:  
Tillotson's  
Rule of  
Faith. Bp:  
Stillingsf.  
Defence  
of A. B.  
Laud. Dr.  
Sherlock's  
Prote-  
stant Re-  
solution  
of Faith.

to continue this to Posterity, but God's preserving the Writings themselves by the ordinary Methods of Providence: and then men may as well learn his Will from thence, as they can know the *Histories* of former Ages, the *Opinions* of *Philosophers*, the *Laws* of their own and other Countries, from the Writings which record each of these particulars: unless we will say, that God cannot order a Book to be writ in as Intelligible a manner, as men can endite it when they are left to themselves. •

But 'twill further appear that 'tis more reasonable to suppose that God should preserve the Knowledge of Christianity by appointing a written Rule of Faith, than by any other means, if we consider,

III. *That he made use of the same means formerly for the Instruction of the Jewish Church.*

With God is no *variableness*, and what he once approves of, he does not afterward lay aside, but upon some great reason. Moses wrote his Law in a book by God's Direction: the Prophets appeal to the Law and to the Testimony<sup>f</sup>, as the only safe Guide, and by which men must judge whether a Doctrine come from God, or not. Our Saviour bids the Jews<sup>g</sup> *search the*

*Scrip-*

<sup>e</sup> Exod.

34. 27.

<sup>f</sup> II. 8 20

<sup>g</sup> Joh. 5.

39.

*Scriptures, for in them they were per-*  
*swaded, and so far they were in the*  
*right, was contain'd the way to Eternal*  
*Life:* and in all his Contests with the  
 Jews, he desir'd no other Vouchers for  
 the Truth of what he said, but *Moses*  
 and the *Prophets*. And 'twill appear  
 very reasonable to believe that God  
 should use the same Method to in-  
 struct the Christian Church which he  
 did the Jewish, if we consider that our  
 Saviour and his Apostles conform'd the  
*External* parts of their Religion, to  
 the Customs receiv'd among the Jews  
 as much as they could, being resolv'd  
 to give no offence by studiously affect-  
 ing Novelties. The Two *Sacraments*  
 were taken from Jewish Rites: the  
*Government* of the Christian Church  
 was framed after the Pattern of the  
 Jewish *Hierarchy*: the Apostles, as 'tis  
 natural for all men to do, being will-  
 ing to retain the Customs they had  
 been bred up in, where-ever the Nature  
 of Christianity did not oblige them to  
 the contrary. From whence 'tis natu-  
 ral to suppose that the Apostles should  
 take care before they left the world,  
 to provide some certain means of  
 Instruction for the Christian Church  
 in Conformity to the Jewish, which  
 might supply their place when they  
 were dead and gone: or else they  
 would

h Deur.  
31.9, 26.

i H. E. l.  
3. c. 24.

k Ap. Euf.  
H. E. l. 2.  
c. 15.

would not have been so faithful in their office as *Moses* was, who delivered the *Book of the Law* to the *Priests* before his *Decease*<sup>h</sup>. And 'tis likely the *Christians* themselves would expect to be provided with as good and sufficient means of knowing their duty, as the *Jews* enjoyed, or else they would have had just cause to complain that they came behind them in the *Advantages of Knowledge and Instruction*. And that this is not a meer *Conjecture*, but the real *Sense* of the first *Christians* is plain, from the *Account* which the *Ancient Writers* give us of the occasion of *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark's* writing their *Gospels*. *Eusebius* tells us particularly for the use of the *Jews* to whom he had preached, because going into other parts he would supply the Want of his Presence by Writing. *Clemens Alexandrinus* saies, <sup>k</sup> That *St. Mark* wrote his Gospel at the Request of the *Christians* at *Rome*, who were not satisfied with an unwritten Tradition of the Word, and therefore desir'd him to commit it to Writing. Which *St. Peter* coming to understand, approved and confirmed this Gospel for the use of the Church. And when these and the other *Apostolical Writings* came into the hands of *Christians*, there was no need of a particular Command

mand from God to make them be received as the Rule of the Christian Faith. For the Character of the Person who wrote them, the Example of the Jewish Church, the Parity of Reason why these Writings should be of equal Authority among Christians, as the Writings of the Old Testament were among the Jews: and lastly the Necessity of having some Standing and Settled Rule of Faith: these were all sufficient Enducements to Christians to look upon the Apostolical Writings as ordained by God, for the Perpetual Use and Instruction of the Church. And this will further appear if we consider,

IV. *That God has actually made use of no other way for the conveying down the Doctrine of Christianity, that can be assign'd, but the Writings of the New Testament.*

'Tis a very weak Argument to infer that things must be so, because we think it Convenient they should be so. This is indeed to prescribe to God Almighty, and tell him he ought to have ask'd our Advice in the Managing of things. And therefore, tho the Arguments for the Infallibility of Tradition, for an Infallible Judge of Controversies, or whatever other Guide men have set up in opposition to the Scriptures, were never so plausible, and

and were as real Demonstrations as the Authors of them fancy them to be, yet as long as 'tis plain by experience that *Tradition* is not *Infallible*, and that there is no *Infallible Judge* of *Controversies*, all these Pretences to Demonstration signify nothing, for Demonstration it self cannot maintain its Ground, when 'tis confuted by Experience. And that neither the Authority of the Church *Representative*, nor the Tradition of the Church *Diffusive*, neither Pope nor Council, jointly or separately, are *Infallible Guides* to Christians, or equivalent to the Scriptures, has been made out with such admirable Clearness, and unanswerable Strength of Reason, by the Learned Defenders of the *Protestant Cause* against *Popery*, that without further insisting upon this Point, I shall refer to them for further Satisfaction, and only Observe that to Deny the Divine Authority of the New Testament, is in effect to deny the *Certainty of the Christian Religion*: for these Books are the only means by which we that live at such a Distance from Christ and his Apostles can come to the Knowledge of that Doctrine which they publish'd: so that if the Apostles were not secured from Error in their Writings, the Christian Church is left without any Certain Means of Instruction. I proceed to the V. Pro-



V. Proposition. *That the Apostles themselves design'd their Writings for the Perpetual Use of the Church, and look'd upon them of Equal Authority with the Writings of the Old Testament.*

The Supernatural Assistance which attended the Apostles in every thing of Moment, and tending to the Edification of the Church, was so Extraordinary: and even their Private Judgment as men, was so Upright and void of all Self-interest and Corruption, that 'twill very much illustrate this matter, to consider what Judgment and Opinion they themselves had of their own Writings.

The very Design of the Gospels shews that they were writ for the *General Use* of the Church, to Record the Doctrine and Miracles of our Saviour, *the Author and Finisher of our Faith*, whom all are to hear and obey. And tho it were some particular *Emergency* that might induce the Evangelists to set about this Work, which yet is to be look'd upon as a *Providential Motion*, yet the Gospels themselves not only answer that particular End which was the first Occasion of their being writ, but are of *General Use*, and fitted to all Ages and times. We have already mention'd the Occasion of *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark's* writing their

1 Luke. i.

their Gospels. St. *Luke* gives us an ' Account of his Undertaking himself, the substance of which is, " That since " many had written an History of our " Saviour's Life and Actions, who " wanted some Advantages of know- " ing the particulars which he had, he " himself being exactly inform'd by " those who were Eye Witnesses and " Parties concern'd, set about a more " accurate account of these Matters, " to the end that every Christian " who will be at the pains to read it, " might know the Certainty of those " things wherein he has been instruct- " ed. It seems from hence that com- mitting things to Writing, was in St. *Luke's* judgment the most certain means of Conveying the Knowledge of them to others.

As for St. *John*, 'tis plain by com-  
paring his Gospel with the other *Three*,  
that he had seen the Rest and approv-  
ed them, <sup>a</sup> and therefore supplied what  
he thought fit, which the former E-  
vangelists had omitted: that so all  
<sup>a</sup> V. *Euf.* of them together might be a *Complete*  
H. E. 1.3. Account of all that Jesus did and taught.  
c. 24. & Hieron: And he himself tells us that his Design  
de Script. Eccl. in writing his Gospel was, <sup>b</sup> *That men*  
*might believe that Jesus is Christ, and*  
*that believing they might have life thro*  
*his Name.* But I shall offer a further  
proof

proof of the Inspiration of the Gospels in the following Chapter. (c) (c)Sect:3:

To proceed to the *Epistles* of the Apostles: it must be confess'd that many of St. *Paul's* were written upon the particular *Exigencies* of the Churches to which they are directed, and were occasion'd by some Disputes that were proper to those times: which may be thought an Argument that they were not design'd for the General Use of the Church. But yet if we consider that the Fundamental Doctrines of Christianity are admirably illustrated by them, and many of the more Mysterious parts of the Gospel-Dispensation more fully treated of in them, than by Christ himself, because there were many things which the Apostles were not able to *bear* <sup>c</sup> while he was with them, and therefore they were referred to the Teaching of the Holy Ghost, for fuller Instruction in such matters: I say if we lay these things together, we must acknowledge it necessary to add the Apostolical Epistles to the Gospels, in order to the making up a *Complete Rule* of Christian Faith: or else we shall be much to seek for an *Authentick* Explication of several Important Points of Christianity. But of this I shall discourse more largely in the next Chapter. To  
return

<sup>c</sup> Joh. 16.  
12.

return to St. Paul's Epistles : I cannot but observe how the Wisdom of God has made St. Paul's Style and way of Writing, to be admirably serviceable to the Edification of the Church, which yet if we examine it by the Rules of *Criticism*, is far from being *Regular* and *Exact*. But his free use of *Digressions*, and those long ones too sometimes, opens him a way into a larger Subject and of more General Use, and does not suffer him to confine himself to that one particular Point, which 'twas his main Design to treat of. And when we find him take occasion from every hint to explain the Mysteries of the Gospel, to set forth the Excellency of it, and to persuade men to live up to the Height of its Precepts, this is not only a sign that his holy Soul was full of this Noble Subject, but is likewise an argument that the Holy Spirit Influenc'd his Pen, and made him enlarge himself upon those Points which were of Universal Concern, and would be for the Perpetual Benefit of the Church in all succeeding Ages. A signal Instance of this you may see in that large *Digression* in the *second Epistle to the Corinthians*, which reaches from the 13. verse of the *Second Chapter*, to the 5. verse of the *Seventh*.  
Where

Where he discourses of some of the Fundamentals of Christianity, with such a true Spirit of Piety, and with such a powerful Force of Natural Eloquence, that if we may prefer one part of that Inspir'd Teacher's Writings before another, we might call this one of the most Elevated Discourses in all St. Paul's Epistles. And as both the Matter of his Epistles, and the Manner how they are writ, discover to us that they were design'd for the Perpetual Use of Christians, so we shall find St. Peter to have been of the same mind, whose words justify all that I have said. For he places St. Paul's Epistles in an equal Rank with those holy Writings, which were on all hands agreed upon to be the Word of God. Thus much his words import, 2 Pet. 3. 15, 16. where speaking of St. Paul's Epistles that there were some things in them *hard to be understood, which ignorant and unstable men wrested and applied to ill purposes, to establish corrupt Doctrines; he adds, As they do also the OTHER SCRIPTURES to their own destruction:* which Expression of [*other Scriptures*] plainly implies that St. Peter look'd upon St. Paul's Epistles as part of the Canon of Scripture, and rank'd them among those Divine Writings which

B

were



were design'd for our Edification and Instruction in Righteousness, and which 'twas dangerous to pervert to a contrary Purpose.

And if St. Paul's Epistles, which were writ upon the Exigencies and with Regard to the State of Particular Churches, were yet still design'd to be of general Use; the same may be said with much greater reason concerning the Epistles of the rest of the Apostles, with aim only at this General Design, to confirm those in the Faith to whom they were directed, *to exhort and testify that this is the true Grace of God wherein they stand*<sup>d</sup>, and to keep up the Remembrance of the Apostles Doctrine after their decease<sup>e</sup>, as St. Peter speaks concerning the Intent of his two Epistles. And we find St. John addresses himself in his First Epistle to all Christians, without Restriction, and even to all Ranks and Degrees of them, whom he distinguishes into *Children, Young men, and Fathers*. And at the beginning of the Epistle, he plainly tells us by what Authority he writ it<sup>f</sup>. This is the Message faith, he, which we have heard from him, i. e. Christ, and declare unto you.

Thus much I think sufficient to prove that the Apostles themselves design'd their Writings for the Perpetual Use

d 1 Pet. 5.  
12.  
e 2 Pet. 1.  
15.

(f) 1. Joh.  
1. 5.



Use of the Church, and look'd upon them as of Equal Authority with the Inspir'd Books of the Old Testament. I proceed to the

VI. and last Proposition, *viz. The Age immediately following that of the Apostles, look'd upon their Writings as the Standing Rule of Faith to the Christian Church.*

Certainly next to the Apostles themselves, the Age immediately following was best able to know what the Apostles thought of their own Writings, and what Authority they challeng'd as due to them. *Irenæus*, one of the Greatest men of the Church in that Age, sufficiently shews the Sense of the Christians of his own time concerning the Authority of these Writings. The *Hereticks* against whom he writes, pretended that their Opinions came originally from the Apostles, and that, whatever the Apostles might say to the contrary in their Writings, yet they taught those very things by word of mouth, which these Hereticks since maintain'd. In answer to this, *Irenæus* does not only confute their Pretences, by shewing that there was Clear and Undoubted Tradition for the Catholic Faith, which in those early Times could easily be trac'd up to the very

g Iren. 1.  
3. c. 3.

h Ibid. 1.  
3. c. 1.

Apostles<sup>s</sup>: but likewise proves that 'tis in vain to set up *Oral Tradition* in Opposition to the Writings of the Apostles, <sup>h</sup> because the *very same Gospel which they at first preach'd, they afterwards by the Will of God committed to Writing, to be the Foundation and pillar of our Faith.* In pursuance of which Testimony we may further observe, that the very Arts which those Hereticks used either to Undermine, or Evade the Authority of the Apostolical Writings, plainly shew their Authority was look'd upon as Sacred and Decisive in the Christian Church.

i. Dissert.  
in Iren.  
I. n.  
40, 41.

The Writers of the same Age do fully bear witness to the Canon of the New Testament. The Learned Mr. Dodwell has observ'd that St. Paul's *Epistles* were generally known and received in the Church soonest of any of the New Testament Writings: and accordingly, besides the Testimony which St. Peter gives them, which we have already mention'd, we may observe, that Ignatius the earliest Writer of the *second Age*, is very industrious in imitating St. Paul's Style, and using his Expressions, as if he had a mind his Readers should take notice that he had studied his *Epistles*. The Authority indeed of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* hath been call'd in question, because

because the Author's not having set his Name to it, has given occasion to doubt whether it were St. Paul's or not. But as this Epistle must be of Apostolical Authority, being older than *Clemens Romanus*, who plainly alludes to it in two places of his *Epistle to the Corinthians* <sup>k</sup>; so the *style*, the *way* of <sup>k</sup> N. 17, *Arguing*, and the *Genius* of the work & 36. discover it to be St. Paul's. But St. Peter puts an end to the dispute; for the saying which he quotes in his second Epistle as St. Paul's, is certainly taken out of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* <sup>l</sup>. 1 2 Pet. 3. 15. The grounds of this Assertion I shall briefly Explain, because I find it questioned by Some: and if it can be made out, it will render the Authority of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* Indisputable. 37. 'Tis certain, that Sentence which St. Peter quotes out of St. Paul's Epistles, *The Long-suffering of the Lord is Salvation*, is not any where extant *totidem verbis* in the writings of St. Paul. And therefore we must enquire where any words of his are to be found that amount to the same Sence. And first St. Peter himself directs us where to look for this Quotation: his words are, verse 15 of this Chapter, *As our beloved Brother Paul hath written to You: i. e. to you Jews or Hebrew Converts, to whom St. Peter directs both his Epistles.*

(a) Comp. files. (1) This is a plain Intimation  
 1. Pet. 1. that St. Peter refers to some Passage in  
 1. with 2 the Epistle to the *Hebrews*: which he  
 Pet. 3. 1. here particularly mentions as distinct  
 from the rest of St. Paul's Epi-  
 stles. And if we examine that whole  
 Epistle, or indeed Search all St. Paul's  
 Writings, we shall find no place so  
 direct to the present purpose, as *Heb.*  
 11. 36, 37. There the Apostle exhorts  
 the *Hebrews* patiently to expect God's  
 appointed time for their Receiving  
 the promised Reward: because 'twould  
 be but *a little while*, (in comparison  
 of God's Eternity, and the Everlast-  
 ing Happiness which he would bestow  
 upon his Servants) *and he that shall*  
*come, i. e. hath promised to come,*  
*will come*: and tho he may seem to  
 men who are naturally impatient un-  
 der their Afflictions, to *tarry long*,  
 and make delays, yet he is not slack  
 or forgetful of his Promise. To the  
 very same purpose St. Peter speaks in  
 the place now before us. At the be-  
 ginning of the Chapter he takes no-  
 tice of that Objection which was of-  
 ten in the mouths of the Scoffing In-  
 fidels of that Age, *Where is the So long*  
*expected promise of Christ's coming.* (b)  
 To which he gives much the same  
 Answer that St. Paul does in the above  
 cited place to the *Hebrews*, by put-  
 ing

) v. 4.

ing the Christians in mind that the time which seem'd long to us, was nothing in Comparison of Eternity, and a <sup>c</sup> *Thousand years was with the Lord* (c) ver. 8. but as one day. And then he adds, <sup>c</sup> (d) ver. 9. that However this was certain, that altho God might seem to delay his coming, yet this did not proceed from such a *Slackness* as men are guilty of, who often alter their minds, and prove worse than their words: but notwithstanding his deferring the day of Judgment for the present, upon great and wise Reasons, yet he would certainly come at last and fulfill his Promise. To confirm which Doctrine, he alledges that saying of St. Paul, the Sense of which we have shewed is exactly to be found, *Heb. 11. 36, 37.* But to resume my former Argument.

The first Epistle of St. Peter is quoted by St. Polycarp, who writ just after Ignatius's death. About the same time certain Pious Men Travell'd from place to place, on purpose to communicate the *Writings of the Gospels*, as Eusebius informs us <sup>m</sup>: which he to be sure <sup>m</sup> *ἡμεῖς* understood of the Four Gospels now <sup>ἡμεῖς</sup> *Εὐαγγέλιον* extant, which only were reckon'd <sup>ἡμεῖς</sup> *ἀληθινὰ* Authentick in his time. And 'tis plain <sup>ἡμεῖς</sup> *ἡμεῖς* they were esteem'd so in the <sup>ἡμεῖς</sup> *Μεσσηνική* Middle of the Second Age, because Justin Mar- <sup>ἡμεῖς</sup> *ἡμεῖς* tyr quotes them generally, whenever c. 37.



he has occasion to mention any thing belonging to the History of our Saviour. But in *Irenaeus's* time their Authority was settled beyond all dispute: for he says positively, <sup>a</sup> *that there are Four Gospels, neither more nor less.* And indeed the Authenticalness of Four Gospels seems to be owing to *St. John* himself, who made them into one Complete Code, as I observed before. <sup>b</sup> The same *Irenaeus* gives a large Testimony to the *Revelations*, and often quotes the *first Epistle of St. John*<sup>p</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> *Iren* l. 3.  
c. 11.

<sup>b</sup> *p.* 14.

<sup>p.</sup> ap. *Euseb.* H. E.  
l. 3. c. 18.  
& l. 5. c. 8.

<sup>q</sup> *Levitan* part  
3. c. 33.

I thought it not improper to give this brief Account of the Testimonies which are given by the earliest Christian Writers, to the most considerable Books of the New Testament, to shew how good a Foundation there is for the Authority of the *New-Testament Canon*: and how little ground there is for *Mr. Hobb's* Insinuation to the contrary, who tells us <sup>a</sup> *that the Writings of the Apostles were not received nor acknowledged as such by the Church, till the Council of Laodicea, which was held in the Year 364. recommended them to Christians.* As if all Christians did not agree in acknowledging such particular Books for the Writings of the Apostles, till they were Recommended to them, as he speaks, and Enumerated

ed



ed by a Council. Which has as little truth in it, as what he says just afterward, that at the time of this Council, *all the Copies of the New Testament were in the hands of Ecclesiasticks*, which if it be not a malicious and willful Mistake in him, is such a piece of ignorance, as a grosser cannot be found in *all the Kingdom of Darknes* which he has described. I find Men generally agree in believing Mr. *Hobbs* to be the Author of the *Leviathan* and several other ill Books, and I fear too many have a great deference for their Authority, though the *Parliament*, (which in Mr. *Hobb's* Opinion hath a juster right to declare what Books or Doctrines are to be received, than a *Council*) hath not yet given us a Catalogue of his Writings or *Recommended* them to the World: which is an Evident proof, that there is no need of the Publick Determination of Authority, to satisfy men that such particular Books are really writ by the Authors whose Names they bear. But to return; I don't pretend to have Collected all that can be alledged to prove the Antiquity of the *New-Testament-Canon*, nor will I go farther upon a Subject that is already undertaken by that *Learned Person* who will shortly Publish an *Elaborate Collection* of all  
the

the *Various Readings* of the New Testament, from whom the World may expect full satisfaction as to this matter.

However I can't but just take notice, that 'tis no prejudice to the Divine Authority of the New Testament, as our Author intimates<sup>a</sup>, that some Books are received into it whose Authors are not certainly known, and therefore, as he argues, of whose Inspiration we can't be certain. He instances in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. But there is sufficient proof that *St. Paul* was the Author of that Epistle, as I have shewed already. And as to the whole New-Testament Canon, 'twas certainly the design of those that Compiled it, only to gather together the Writings of the Apostles, or of such as writ by their direction, as the Ancients tells us *St. Mark* did by *St. Peter's*<sup>b</sup>, & *St. Luke* by *St. Paul's*<sup>c</sup>. So that the only reason why some Books were doubted of, was because it did not clearly appear whether they were Writ by Apostles or not, and as soon as that point was cleared their Authority was immediately Establish'd. And so much for the proving the *Sixth Proposition*.  
And I think supposing these Six Propositions proved, this Conclusion will plainly follow from what has been said,

<sup>a</sup> Fr. p.  
266. Eng.  
p. 85:

<sup>b</sup> Clem.  
Alex. ap.  
Euf. H. E.  
l. 2. c. 15.  
<sup>c</sup> Iren. ap.  
eund. l. 5.  
c. 8. vid.  
Grot. in  
Luc. 21.  
34. &  
1 Cor. 11.  
23, 24,  
25. compar'd  
with Luk.  
22. 19, 20.

said, that the Books of the New-Testament were Written by God's Direction, and design'd by Him for the Perpetual use and Instruction of the Church, and are the only Fixt Rule which he has appointed for this purpose.

I shall draw some Conclusions from these Premises, which will tend to illustrate and explain the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Writings.

1. *It follows from hence that the Holy Ghost assisted the Apostles as fully when they Writ, as when they Preached.* How far this assistance extended, and wherein it consisted, I shall examine particularly in the next Chapter: at present I intend only to shew that we may presume there is as great a degree of Inspiration to be found in their Writings, as was in their Preaching. For since the reason why this Assistance accompanied them in their Preaching, was the benefit of the Church, that they might *Guide it into all Truth*, without any danger of mixing error with it: the same reason holds much stronger for their Writings, which do not serve for the Instruction of One Age only, as their Preaching did, but of Many. And therefore tho we should suppose that they use Arguments *ad Hominem* sometimes, and proceed upon such Principles

ples as were generally admitted in the Age they lived, without nicely examining whether they were true or not; yet this only shews that they thought fit to explain Divine Truths in such a manner as was most suitable to the Capacity of the persons they were immediately to Instruct. And as we must grant that tho the New Testament was design'd for the use of future Ages, yet the Phrase and Style and Argumentation used in it is wholly accomodated to the Sentiments and Usage of that Age in which 'twas writ: so St. Paul himself does plainly imply that he does not always use the Best Arguments, but sometimes such as are best fitted to the Capacities and Notions of those he Writes to. For thus we find him express himself by way of excuse for the Argument he makes use of, *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh*: which is as much as if he had said, I could bring a better argument to prove what I say, but this which I make use of is more suitable to your Capacities, and may perhaps more effectually convince you, than a better.

d Rom.  
6. 19.

2. It follows secondly, that *since the Books of the New Testament*, (and the same reason holds as to any other Wri-

Writings of the same rank and use) were design'd to be a standing rule of Faith to Christians, the Holy Ghost, tho he did not generally Dictate the words which the holy Writers used, yet directed them to express their minds in such a manner, that those who have a regard to the Dialect and way of speaking in which they writ, might rightly understand them; or at least the Holy Spirit prevented their giving just occasion for Men's errors and mistakes in matters of Consequence, by their Phrases and Expressions. And such a degree of assistance is absolutely necessary to make these Books a *standing Rule of Faith*. For tho we suppose the Holy Writers used a *Popular* style, and consequently made use of such *Hyperboles* and *Metaphors* and other improprieties of Speech, which common practice allows of in all Languages, (especially where they occasionally speak of *Philosophical* matters, and things not immediately relating to Religion:) yet unless we suppose them to speak properly in those *Terms of Art* which are of Fundamental use in the explaining the Doctrines of Christianity, and upon the sense of which whole Controversies turn, and as they are differently taken they alter the very face of the Christian Religion; I say, except we suppose the Apostles to speak properly,



perly, i. e. agreeably to their own Simplicity and Plainness of Speech, and in such a manner as was most likely to be understood by those they writ to, when they treat of matters of great Importance, and such as are justly to be reckon'd *Fundamental* Doctrines, the New Testament will not answer the ends of a Rule of Faith. For a Book is of no use to explain or decide any Controversy, if we can have no fixt rule whereby to judge of its style, so as to be in some measure certain what is its true sense. And 'tis very strange if a Book writ by persons who had an extraordinary assistance from God, and which was design'd for Universal use, should not be worded with that care which Humane Industry uses in matters of Importance. And therefore we have reason to rely upon the Assistance of the holy Spirit, even with relation to the *Phrase* and *Letter* of the Scripture, and to believe that he has so far directed the holy Pen-men, that their Phrases and Expressions should not lead Men into error in *matters of Consequence*; but may be rightly understood by those that acquaint themselves with the Dialect in which they writ, and consult the Ages nearest the Apostles, who must needs be, next to their own style;



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(g) V. Fr. another. Our Author follows them  
 p. 234. in this, as well as in some other things,  
 Eng. p. and often cautions us "not to subtilize  
 146. "about the expressions, nor stick too close  
 b Eng. p. "to the Letter of the Scripture, since the  
 107, 111. "style of Scripture is so far from being ex-  
 Fr. p. 280, "act, that 'tis very careless: and tells us,  
 281. En. p. "that laying too great stress upon words,  
 117. Fr. "has been the occasion of most of the Dis-  
 p. 285. "putes among Christians. I readily grant  
 Eng. p. it has; but then the fault has been that  
 145, 146. Men have either Interpreted Scripture-  
 Fr. p. 233, Expressions by notions of Philosophy,  
 234. which the Holy Writers never heard  
 i Eng. p. of, or else they have not inquired into  
 170, 116. the Sentiments of those times in which  
 Fr. p. 280. these Books were writ, but have judg-  
 285. ed of their sense by the Schemes, and  
 applied them to the Disputes of Modern  
 Ages, as if they were writ only with  
 a regard to the Controversies that  
 should arise in After-Times, without  
 any respect to the Sentiments and  
 Exigencies of the Age wherein they  
 were written. But if we have a re-  
 gard only to the Genius of the Lan-  
 guage which the Holy Writers used;  
 and judge of their Sentiments by the  
 State of the Church in their time, and  
 by such Ancient Authors as were most  
 likely to be acquainted with the No-  
 tions which were then generally re-  
 ceived; I don't think laying stress up-  
 on

on the Phrases of the Scriptures can lead us into such gross errors as Mr. N. imagines<sup>k</sup>. And without supposing this, we can scarce deduce any In-<sup>k Eng. p. 146.</sup>ferences from Scripture Texts, and yet this is practis'd by the Apostles<sup>Fr. p. 234.</sup> themselves; who sometimes argue from Words, and those too taken in their nicest signification. A remarkable example of the which is that Inference of St. Paul's, <sup>1</sup> *To Abraham and to his* <sup>1 Gal. 3.</sup> *seed were the Promises made: he saith* <sup>16.</sup> *not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

3. Since God in his Providence took care that these Books should be Writ for the use of his Church, and therefore gave Providential occasions for their being Writ-ten, it follows that they are Compos'd in such a manner as not to exclude the use of the Natural Reason and Meditation of of the Writers who Compos'd them.

Works of Providence are not sup-posed to exclude Humane means, and we believe many things to be brought to pass by the determinate Counsel and power of God, tho they are not purely Miraculous and meerly God's own Act and Deed, but are brought to pass by second Causes as his Instru-ments. And why then can't he give Men a Rule of Faith and Manners, except the Writing be with the imme-

*diate Finger of God, as the Two Tables were? 'Tis certain that the ordinary Operations of the Spirit do only excite and assist our natural Faculties, not supersede or render them useless. And even the extraordinary ones do very often influence Men's minds after the same manner, as appears by*

*m 1 Tim. St. Paul's advice to Timothy, " Give*  
*4. 14. attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, neglect not the Gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy. And to the same purpose he speaks in*

*n 2 Tim. the second Epistle ". And therefore*  
*1. 6. tho we suppose the Authors of the Scriptures to have been Inspir'd, and to have had the extraordinary Affluences of God's Spirit, yet this will not exclude the use of their Natural Talents, but that the Writers made use of them as far as they could be serviceable to their purpose, and God supplied their defects. Prophecy was the highest Degree of Inspiration under the Old Testament: yet 'tis certain that the Prophets were usually left to themselves for the wording their Prophecies, as appears from Jer. 36. 22. And the different Styles which they use according to their different Genius's and Educations, are an evident Argument of the same thing. From all which appears the weakness of that*

*Argu-*

Argument which is urged by our Author, and by some others, against the Inspiration of the Poetical Books ° of Fr. p. the Old Testament, *because they seem* 230. En. *to be the effects of Study and Meditation :* P. 27. and against that of the Historical Books of the Scripture, <sup>P</sup> because the <sup>P</sup> *things contain'd in them are either of the* <sup>Grot. vo-</sup> *Writers own Knowledge, or else taken* <sup>tum pro</sup> *from Ancient Memoirs, or the Relation of* <sup>pace, p.</sup> *others.* 672. <sup>Refutat.</sup> To the same purpose 'tis urg- <sup>Apologet.</sup> ed against the Divine Authority of St. <sup>p. 722.</sup> Paul's Epistles by *Spinoza*<sup>a</sup>, that *they* <sup>Theol.</sup> *are full of Argumentation,* which he <sup>Polit.</sup> thinks must be the effect of St. Paul's <sup>c. 11.</sup> own reason. As if a Man that had a perfect System of the Christian Religion infused into his mind by Revelation, as we suppose St. Paul to have had, did not apprehend it after a Rational manner, and see the whole Series and Chain of its Principles, by the help of which he could infer one thing from another. But is it not a pleasant Argument against the Inspiration of a Book, that it is writ in a Rational and Argumentative way? Which must either suppose that 'tis below God Almighty to give a reason for his Institutions : or else that 'twas not proper for the Apostles to shew their *Disciples* that the Doctrines they taught them were such as might be Rational-

ly deduced from certain Principles, and to confute their *Adversaries* the same way, who would not submit to their bare Authority, nor believe a thing to be true, meerly because they said so.

4. *It follows from what has been said, that 'tis no Argument against a Book's being design'd by God for the perpetual use of the Church, that 'twas at first writ upon some particular Exigency, and with relation to the peculiar Circumstances of the persons to whom 'tis directed.*

For some of those Books of the Old Testament which were certainly design'd for the publick benefit of the Church, as 'tis granted by all that acknowledge any such thing as Inspiration, (and I don't at present concern my self with any others) I say some of the Undoubtedly Inspir'd Writings were occasion'd by the particular Exigencies of those times in which their Authors lived. I mean the Books of the *Prophets*, who were all sent by God to testify against the sins which were committed in their own times: And if God so order'd it, that these Prophecies should be of perpetual use to the Church, why may not the other *Occasional* Writings of the Scripture, if I may so term them, have been compos'd with the same Design?

† Pag. 16. I have already shewed that the manner



ner of St. Paul's Writing does excellently answer this Intent. From hence it appears that the Argument used by some *Popish* Writers why the New Testament cannot be a perfect Rule of the Christian Faith, because several parts of it were writ only with Relation to particular Exigences of some one Church, holds as well against the Old Testament being a Rule to the Jews, because a great part of it, *viz.* the Prophecies, were occasion'd by the particular Circumstances of those Times in which the Prophets lived.

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## CHAP. II.

*A more particular Inquiry into the nature of the Apostolical Gifts and Inspiration.*

HAVING said thus much in general concerning the Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Apostolical Writings, I proceed to examine more distinctly the Assertions which the *Author of the Letters* hath laid down concerning the Inspiration of the Apostles and of their Writings : and in order to that shall consider particularly, both as to their Na-

ture and Extent, some of the most remarkable Gifts, with which the Holy Spirit indowed the Apostles. I find our Author is very industrious to lessen the Apostolical Gifts, as much as he can, and to represent them very little above their natural Faculties. He endeavours to shew, *"That the Operation of the Holy Spirit upon their Minds, consisted chiefly in refreshing their Memories, <sup>a</sup> and bringing to their Remembrance what Christ had said unto them. He does indeed say, <sup>b</sup> That sometimes the Holy Spirit made them understand by extraordinary Revelations, that which Christ had said unto them whilst he was with them, but which they then understood not. And that they had many immediate Revelations and divers heavenly Visions <sup>c</sup> And in another place, <sup>d</sup> That perhaps the Spirit open'd their Minds after a manner we comprehend not. But whilst he sets out the Objections against the Inspiration of the Apostles in the best Light, and with the greatest Force he can, he passes over the Evidences for it very slightly, and looks upon their Immediate Inspirations to have been so extraordinary, and to have happen'd so seldom, that he does not stick roundly to declare, <sup>e</sup> That their Infallibility consisted in relating faithfully what*

<sup>a</sup> Fr. p. 254, 257. En. p. 66. *"refreshing their Memories, <sup>a</sup> and bringing to their Remembrance what Christ had said unto them. He does indeed say, <sup>b</sup>*

<sup>b</sup> Fr. p. 255. En. p. 67. *"That sometimes the Holy Spirit made them understand by extraordinary Revelations, that which Christ had said unto them whilst he was with them, but which they then understood not. And that they had many immediate Revelations and divers heavenly Visions <sup>c</sup> And*

<sup>c</sup> Fr. p. 252. Eng. 62. *"in another place, <sup>d</sup> That perhaps the Spirit open'd their Minds after a manner we comprehend not. But whilst he sets out the Objections against the*

<sup>d</sup> Fr. 257. Eng. p. 70. *Inspiration of the Apostles in the best Light, and with the greatest Force he can, he passes over the Evidences for it very slightly, and looks upon their Immediate Inspirations to have been so extraordinary, and to have happen'd so seldom, that he does not stick roundly to declare, <sup>e</sup> That their Infallibility consisted in relating faithfully what*

what they had seen and heard. He likewise endeavours to shew, <sup>f</sup> That they <sup>f</sup> Fr. p. had not an extraordinary Assistance, when <sup>240.</sup> &c. they were summon'd before the Secular <sup>Eng. p.</sup> Powers, upon the Account of their Religi- <sup>42, &c.</sup> on.

And he makes this another argument against the Inspiration of the Apostles, and other persons in those times whom the Scripture speaks of as inspir'd, <sup>g</sup> that they confer'd with one <sup>g</sup> Fr. p. another, and submitted to one another's <sup>248, 249.</sup> Judgments, and did not come to a Conclu- <sup>259.</sup> sion concerning any matter in question, till <sup>Eng. p.</sup> after long Deliberation, and Consultation <sup>57. 74.</sup> with each other : with many other Councils of less weight. In Answer to which, and for the clearing of this Matter I shall shew,

I. How far we may allow what he says to be true, and in what Cases the Apostles may be supposed not to speak or act by Inspiration.

II. I shall shew that excepting those Cases, the Apostles writ and spake by the particular Assistance and Direction of the Spirit.

III. I shall shew that the Assistance of the Holy Spirit did not consist only or chiefly in Improving their Natural Faculties, or Strengthening and Refreshing their Memories.

IV. I shall shew that they had an extraordinary Assistance, when they were sum-

mon'd before Magistrates upon the Account of their Religion: and vindicate their Behaviour under those Circumstances, from the unbecoming Reflections which Mr. N. has made upon it.

V. I shall vindicate the Inspiration of the Apostles and other inspir'd persons from the rest of the Objections which he advances against it.

I. As to the first of these Inquiries, What were the Cases wherein the Apostles may be supposed not always to act or speak by Inspiration, I conceive we may allow them to be these following.

1. Where they treat of the common Occurrences of Life, and such things as have no Relation at all to Divine Truths. As when St. Paul speaks of his design to take Rome <sup>h</sup> in his way to Spain, and to call at <sup>i</sup> Corinth as he went into Macedonia: but yet it appears he was uncertain as to that Resolution, <sup>k</sup> and did not actually <sup>l</sup> make it good. And even that Expression of St. Paul, (<sup>m</sup>) I know that ye all among whom I have gon preaching, shall see my face no more, tho deliver'd with some degree of Assurance, yet 'twas with an Assurance grounded but upon Humane Conjecture. He says just before, (<sup>n</sup>) that he did not know what things should befall him at Jerusalem, but the Holy Ghost testified by men Inspired in every City through

<sup>h</sup> Rom.

15. 24.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Cor.

1. 16.

<sup>k</sup> 1. Cor.

16. 7.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Cor.

17.

(<sup>m</sup>) Acts

20. 25.

(<sup>n</sup>) vs. 22.

23.

through which he pass'd, that he must expect *Bonds and Afflictions* there: and these he supposed might end in Death, and he might probably finish his Course <sup>(o)</sup> in that place. Upon these grounds he took it for granted that he should never see the Eastern parts again: but yet it pleased God to prolong his life contrary to his Expectations, and give him another Opportunity of visiting those Countries. For it may be concluded, from several passages <sup>(p)</sup> in *Sr. Paul's* Epistles, and particularly in those to *Timothy* <sup>(q)</sup> and *Titus* <sup>(r)</sup> that after his first Imprisonment at *Rome*, he travell'd again over *Greece* and *Asia*. For the further proof of which Matter, I refer the Reader to the *Posthumous Dissertations* of our Incomparable Bishop *Pearson*, where he will find this Point made out beyond all possibility of Contradiction. Many Instances of the like nature might be alledg'd. Hitherto we may refer *Slips of memory in matters of no consequence*, some Examples of which many Learned men suppose may be found in the New Testament <sup>(s)</sup>.

2. In some Cases the Apostles seem to lay aside their Authority; at least not to speak with that Fulness of Power as Ambassadors of Christ, which they use at other times; of which I shall give two Instances.

The

<sup>(o)</sup> *vs. 24.*  
*see ch. 2 I.*

<sup>(p)</sup> *see*

<sup>(q)</sup> *see*  
*2. Philip.*

*24. Phile.*

*22. Heb.*

*13. 23.*

<sup>(r)</sup> *1 Tim.*

*1. 3.*

*2 Tim: 4.*

*6, 7, 20.*

<sup>(s)</sup> *Tit: 1.*

*5. 12.*

<sup>(s)</sup> *vid.*

*1 Cor. I.*

*16.*

*1 Joh. 6.*

*19.*

*Acts 19.*

*7.*

<sup>(t)</sup> *Mat.*

*27. 9.*

*Acts 7.*

*16.*

The first is, *When they treat of such things as are matters purely of Humane Prudence, being of an Indifferent Nature in themselves, and therefore the safer Side is rather Recommended to mens choice, than Enjoyed as a matter of Strict Obligation.* For matters of Prudence, i. e. where God has given men no fix'd Rule, but left them at liberty to determine for themselves as their Circumstances shall direct, as they are not the proper Subjects of a Divine Law, so neither are they of such a Divine Revelation, which

(a) see 1 is to be a fixt Rule for men's practice.  
Cor. 7. 6. (a) For this Reason, as St. *Austin*

(b) *Aliud est Domini juben-  
tis imperium, aliud  
conservi secundum miseri-  
cordiam charitatis, quæ  
illi à Domino inspirata &  
donata est, fidele consilium;  
Ibi aliud facere non licet,  
hic autem licet: ita sane,  
ut ipsum licitum partim  
quidem expediat, partim  
non expediat.* August. de  
adalterin. Conjug. l. 1. c.  
18.

has judiciously observ'd,  
(b) the Authority with  
which the Apostles speak  
when they deliver the  
express Commands of  
Christ, is much greater  
than that which they  
use when they deter-  
mine Points of an In-  
different nature by the  
Rules of Humane Pru-  
dence, and the Mea-  
sures of Christian Cha-  
rity.

Where God's Express Com-  
mand interposes there is no Room  
for Prudential Considerations, but  
where the Holy Writers give only  
Council and Advice, the things remain  
the



the same in their own Nature, and are still Lawfull as before, but yet to be abstain'd from in some Circumstances as not Expedient.

(c) Such is the Case of married Persons where one party is an Unbeliever, which St. Paul considers, ° and resolves by the Rules of humane Prudence, (and therefore tells us before hand, that 'tis He that speaks, not the Lord) \* taking his measures from the general Law of Christian Charity. For as to this Case I take Mr. *Thornike's* ° Opinion to be the most probable, which is, That the Apostle look'd upon Marriage made by persons before they were Christians, to lay no stricter

Obligation upon the Parties, than the Laws which they were under when the Marriage was contracted, design'd to lay upon them. So that if two persons who were under the Laws of the *Roman Empire* married, and afterward one of them turn'd Christian, this

(c) Aug. ubi sup. c. 21. *Illud intelligimus dicere Dominum quod ita jubet, aut vetat, ut aliud facere omnino non liceat: quod autem volentis potestati permittit, ibi servorum suorum consilio locum dare videtur, ut id potius suadeant quod viderint expedire.* ° 1 Cor. 7. 12.

\* Cum ait, Ego dico non Dominus, satis ostendit Dominum non prohibere quod ipse prohibebat. Prohibuisset autem Dominus, si esset illicitum. Ergo licitum erat per justitiam, sed licitum non erat faciendum propter liberam benevolentiam. Aug. ubi sup. c. 20.

p Laws of the Church p. 117.

this did not at all alter the Conditions of the Marriage, in respect of the Converted Party, from what they were before: nor in a Marriage contracted by Subjects of the *Roman* Empire, under the state of *Heathenism*, was the Converted Party by virtue of his embracing Christianity afterward, oblig'd anew by the stricter Ties of the Christian Law concerning Marriage, but only by those which the *Roman* Laws required, upon which Terms the Marriage was made at first: and so might upon just occasion, take Advantage of the Privilege which the *Roman* Laws permitted, of being Divorced for other Causes besides that which was allowed by our Saviour. Now the reason why the Laws of Christianity do not extend to a Marriage contracted under a state of Heathenism I conceive to be this: because Heathen Marriages being not in their own nature Indissoluble, as Christian Marriages are, but the Parties having reserv'd to themselves a liberty to part from each other, in such Cases as the Laws of each Country allowed, the nature of the Marriage-contract still continues the same, after the Conversion of either Party which it did before, *i. e.* Dissoluble, unless the Believing Party can perswade the Unbelieving, to oblige him-

himself to the Observation of those  
 stricter Laws of Matrimony, which  
 are enjoyn'd by Christ. Without which  
 mutual Consent the Marriage con-  
 tinues the same it was before, while  
 both Parties were Unbelievers: and  
 consequently the Laws of Christ do  
 not reach this Case, being applicable  
 only to those Marriages which are  
 made in the Christian Church, or at  
 least which are made Christian by an  
 After-act, and mutual Consent of the  
 Parties to submit to the Christian Law  
 in this particular. This Opinion seems  
 to be countenanc'd by the Apostle in  
 the 15. verse of that Chapter. <sup>9</sup> If <sup>9</sup> 1 Cor.  
*the Unbeliever depart, a Brother or Sister* <sup>7. 15.</sup>  
*is not under Bondage in such Cases:* the  
 most natural Sense of which Words  
 is, if the Marriage Contract be broke  
 on the Unbelievers side, the Believer  
 is no longer tied <sup>9</sup> by it. Which is <sup>9</sup> 2 A<sup>9</sup> 6-  
 not true of a Marriage wherethe Laws <sup>λωται.</sup>  
 of Christianity take place, forthere the <sup>see ver. 39.</sup>  
 Breach of the Marriage Covenant on <sup>& Rom.</sup>  
 one side, does not dissolve the Bond, <sup>7. 1, 2, 3.</sup>  
 nor release the other party from the  
 Obligation of it, except in the Case of  
 Adultery, which St. Paul does not  
 here suppose. Which seems to me  
 plainly to prove that St. Paul did not  
 think the Laws of Christianity were  
 to be extended to such Marriages as  
 these

these. This seems to have been the sense of the Primitive Christians, by the Story which gave occasion to *Justin Martyr's first Apology*, (as 'tis usually reckon'd) concerning a Woman that being Converted to Christianity, after having used many endeavours to reclaim her Husband from his vicious course of Life, when they all proved ineffectual, sent him a Divorce drawn up according to the form prescribed by the *Roman Laws*. This action of hers is commended by *Justin Martyr*; which I suppose he would not have done, if he had thought the Laws of the Gospel took place in such a Marriage as this, which was contracted in a state of Heathenism. For certainly Christianity does not allow the Wife to put away her Husband upon any account whatsoever: since that was never allowed by *Moses's Law*, nor ever practis'd among the *Jews* till *Herod's* time, when *Salome* sent a Bill of Divorce to her Husband, which was done contrary to the *Jewish Laws*, as *Josephus*<sup>b</sup>, who relates it, observes. And if this be the true state of the case concerning Marriage, where one party is a Convert to Christianity, and the true ground of *St. Paul's* resolving the questi-

r *Apol.* i.  
init.

a Τὸ λεγόμενον παρ' ὑμῶν 'Ρωμαίων.  
Ibid.

b *Antiq.*  
l. 15. c. 9. p.  
532. B.

question proposed to him concern-  
 ing this matter; the reason is plain  
 why he introduces his answer with  
 this Preface, *I, not the Lord*; for  
 this case is of the same nature \* with \* *Discede-*  
 the other Indifferent things St. Paul *re ab infi-*  
 discourses of in the same Chapter, *deli con-*  
 where he gives his judgment about the *juge licet,*  
 state of Virginity and Widowhood *sed non*  
 The doubts concerning which matters *expedit.*  
 he resolves by the Rules of Prudence, Aug. de.  
 and with respect to the present *Adulter.*  
*Di-* Conj. l. 1.  
*stres*, and the difficulties which at- c. 15.  
 tended the Profession of Christianity. d. 1 Cor.  
 But even here the Apostle gives us a 7. 26.  
 plain Intimation that the Infal-  
 lible Spirit of God directed him in Resolv-  
 ing these cases of Conscience, when he  
 tells us he gave his Opinion about these  
 Questions, *as one that hath obtained mer-*  
*cy of the Lord to be faithful*; \* And again, e. 1 Cor.  
*After my Judgment, and I think that I* 7. 25.  
*also have the Spirit of God.* \* Which f. ver. 40.  
 words are far from implying any  
 Distrust that the Apostle had of his  
 being Inwardly Assisted by the Holy  
 Ghost in the directions which he had  
 given: for they are spoken by the  
 Figure the Rhetoricians call *Meiosis*,  
 (a way of speaking very familiar with  
 St. Paul) and are a modest Insinuation  
 of the Authority by which he spake,  
 and the Deference that was due to his  
 Judg-

\* *Intelligendum est etiam ipsa quæ non à Domino jubentur, sed à sancto ejus famulo utiliter suadentur, eodem Domino inspirante suaderi.* Aug. de adulterin. conjug. l. 1. c. 18. g See Rom. 15. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 10. 7. 11. 5.

Judgment \*. This will appear by comparing the words with other places of his Writings, where he mentions his own Authority and Gifts with the like Modesty and Tenderneſs. (\*) And even that very Expression, *I, not the Lord*, im-

plys no more than that the Apostle had no expreſs Command <sup>(b)</sup> to deliver from the Lord upon the Point in hand, as he had in the Caſe before mention'd, verſe 10: but yet he had reaſon to think that the Holy Spirit directed and aſſiſted \* him in giving his Opinion, tho what he ſaid were rather matter of Counſel, than of ſtrict and Indispensable Precept.

*dere, nec*

*prohibet nec jubet Dominus, ideo ut non diſcedat dicit Apoſtolus Non Dominus; habens utique Spiritum S. in quo dare poſſit utile et fidele conſilium.* Aug. ibid.

A ſecond Inſtance I ſhall give of the Apoſtles laying aſide his Divine Character, is in thoſe words of St. Paul, <sup>(i)</sup> *That which I ſpeak, I ſpeak not after the Lord, but as it were fooliſhly, in this confidence of Boaſting.* For the full underſtanding of which place we are to conſider, that there were *false Teachers* crept

i 2 Cor.  
11. 17.



in among the *Corinthians*, who pretended to be much more powerful and Edifying Preachers <sup>(k)</sup> than St. Paul, <sup>(k)</sup> see whom they slighted as a person of a mean <sup>(l)</sup> Presence and contemptible Elocution. The Apostle therefore to vindicate his Authority, and arm the *Corinthians* against these Seducers, sets forth how much he has done and suffered <sup>(m)</sup> for the Gospel, what Revelations God has vouchsafed to honour him with, and that in no respects he is any thing inferior to the very cheifest Apostles. But because he was sensible that for a man to praise himself is neither Decent in its self, (except when absolute Necessity constrains men to it, which was his Case) nor very Acceptable to others, upon this account he expresses his Unwillingness to enter upon so Ungrateful a Subject, he calls it his *Folly*, and desires their pardon for troubling them with a Recital of his own praises, verse 1. of this Chap. and verse 17. which I intend now to explain, *That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, &c.* These words I take to be spoken by way of Concession, if as St. Paul had said, What I have to say upon this Head I deliver not as a piece of Gospel, nor do I require you to receive it with the same Regard as

D the

“ the rest of my Writings: let it  
 “ pass for a piece of Vanity and Oken-  
 “ tation in me, if you think it so;  
 “ at least ’tis no worse Folly than those  
 “ so much admir’d Teachers of yours  
 “ have been guilty of. And thus by  
 an Eloquent sort of Concession, (of  
 which several other Instances are to  
 be found in this <sup>(p)</sup> and the follow-  
 ing <sup>(q)</sup> Chapter) St. Paul at once takes  
 off the Odium of praising himself, and  
 withal shews the inexcusable Vanity  
 of those False Apostles, who set such  
 a high value upon themselves, when  
 they were in so many Respects his  
 inferiors. But yet least any man should  
 take advantage of this Concession,  
 he shews that ’twas more than he was  
 bound to grant, when he says, <sup>(r)</sup>  
*Let no man think me a fool* in thus vin-  
 dicating my Authority: and again, <sup>(s)</sup>  
*We speak before God in Christ.* And I  
 am perswaded every impartial Reader  
 will confess, that the Apology which  
 St. Paul makes for himself in this, the  
 foregoing, and following Chapters,  
 is a most Edifying History of the  
 Transcendent Virtues of this Great  
 Apostle: of his <sup>(t)</sup> Constancy and  
 Patience in suffering for the Gospel:  
 of his Unwearied <sup>(u)</sup> Labours in Preach-  
 ing it: of his Hearty Concern <sup>(w)</sup> for  
 the success of it, which extended it self

(p) See. ve.

4. &amp; 8.

(q) See ch.

12. 13.

(r) ver. 16.

(s) c. 12.

19. comp.

c. 2. 17.

&amp; c. 13. 3.

(t) c. 11.

23. &amp; c.

(u) c. 10.

13. &amp; c.

(w) c. 11.

23.

to the Care of all the Churches: of his utterly Renouncing all Self-Interest and Worldly Considerations, <sup>(x)</sup> and seeking <sup>(x)</sup> c. 11. ing nothing but the good of men's <sup>(y)</sup> 9, &c. Souls: of his giving God the Glory <sup>(y)</sup> c. 12. of all the good that was in him, and <sup>13, 14, 15.</sup> magnifying the Power of his Grace, <sup>(z)</sup> <sup>(z)</sup> c. 12. which was more eminently conspicuous <sup>9, 10, 11.</sup> in the midst of Humane Weakness.

And if we further consider, with what Modesty the Apostle speaks of himself, with what Zeal for God's Honour, with what a Tender concern for the welfare of those to whom he writes: we must acknowledge that he has not only effectually confuted that Calumny of his Adversaries, who upbraided him that he was *rude in Speech*: <sup>(a)</sup> but <sup>(a)</sup> c. 10. likewise has given evident proof of <sup>10.</sup>

*Christ's speaking in him*, <sup>b</sup> and that his <sup>b</sup> c. 13. 3. Power did rest upon him <sup>c</sup>. <sup>c</sup> 12. 9.

3. Another Instance wherein we may reasonably suppose the Apostles spake without Inspiration, is *when they discourse of such things as our Saviour told them they must be content to be ignorant of*. Such as was the time when the Day of Judgment should come, which was a secret God had reserved <sup>d</sup> to <sup>d</sup> Matt. himself: and of Restoring the Kingdom <sup>24. 36.</sup> to Israel <sup>e</sup>. As to the former of these, <sup>e</sup> Act. 1. 6. 'tis plain the Apostles thought the Day of Judgment might possibly come in

f See their own time, or within a very  
 1 Gor. 10, little while afterward<sup>f</sup>. But this they  
 11, only gathered by Humane Reasoning,  
 -- 15. 52. and conjectures drawn from some  
 2 Cor. 5. Expressions found in the Old Testa-  
 3. ment, or used by our Saviour, such as  
 2 Pet. 3. 4. the Calling the times of the Gospel *the*  
 1 Pet. 4. 7. *Latter Days*, an Expression often used  
 Heb. 9. by the Prophets, and our Saviour's  
 26. joining together the Destruction of *Je-*  
 Jam. 5. 8. *rusalem*, and the end of the World in  
 St. *Matthew* the 24<sup>th</sup>. And as the  
 event has proved that they were mi-  
 staken, so they themselves did not pre-  
 tend to Revelation for what they  
 said in this case, but spoke of it in  
 doubtful terms, as may be seen in the  
 place above cited<sup>e</sup>, *If so be we shall be*  
 found *Cloth'd, not naked*, for so the  
 Words should be Translated.

g 2 Cor.  
 5. 3.  
 Εἴ γε ὡς  
 ἐνδεδυ-  
 νοί, & γυμ-  
 νοί, δι-  
 ενδυθή-  
 σμεθα.

In these cases I think 'twill be no  
 prejudice to the Divine Inspiration of  
 the Apostles, to allow them to have  
 spoke like Men. And 'tis unreason-  
 able for any to pretend, that if we  
 grant thus much, we do in effect give  
 up the Cause, and that then 'twill be im-  
 possible to distinguish what the Apo-  
 stles say by the Spirit, and what they  
 speak of themselves. For surely Men  
 may distinguish if they please, the  
 Mysteries of Faith, and the Rules of  
 Practice, from a *Cloak* and *Parchments*,

or a *Journey to Corinth* : which belong to the first excepted Case. And to prevent all Mistake in this matter, the Apostle himself plainly distinguishes this Case from the Doctrines of Religion which he taught. In the beginning of the *second Epistle* to the *Corinthians*,<sup>(a)</sup> he excuses himself that he *a 2 Cor.* did not come and see them, as he had *1. 15, 16.* promised in his former Epistle. <sup>(b)</sup> *b 1 Cor.* And in defence of himself he says that *16. 5.* this altering his Resolution did not proceed from a *Lightness* <sup>(c)</sup> or Fickleness of Temper, nor from any *Fleshly* <sup>(d)</sup> *1. 17.* or Worldly Considerations, but from *d Ibid.* great and weighty Reasons. <sup>(e)</sup> But withall he adds, <sup>(f)</sup> that however they *e See ver. 23. and c. 2. 1.* might censure the Uncertainty of his Resolutions in Temporal Affairs, yet *f c. 1. 18,* they could not accuse him of any variation in respect of the Gospel which he had preach'd among them : there he kept to one Immutable Rule, which was the Truth of God himself.

In the second Instance, the Apostle rather waves his Authority as an Inspired writer, and lays it aside for the present, than wants it. But if we should grant the utmost, and suppose him not to be Inspired in what he writes upon this Subject, we have himself plainly distinguishing this from his usual way of Writing, and telling

g 1 Cor. us that 'tis *he speaks, not the Lord* <sup>i</sup>, and  
 7. 12. that *he had no Commandment from the*  
 b 1 Cor. *Lord, but only gave his Judgment* <sup>h</sup>.  
 7. 25. The same Expression we find else-  
 i 2 Cor. where in a like case <sup>i</sup>, viz. concern-  
 8. 8, 10. ing the measures of Charity, which  
 are to be settled by the Rules of Pru-  
 dence, and don't fall under a Divine  
 Command. Now if an *Exception con-*  
*firms a Rule in Cases not Excepted*, we  
 may justly infer from the Apostle's set-  
 ting a mark upon these Discourses to  
 distinguish them from Divine Com-  
 mands, that where there is no such  
 distinguishing mark, we must suppose  
 him to deliver what he says under  
 the Character of an Apostle and a  
 Messenger of God, unless the nature  
 of the Discourse do plainly imply the  
 contrary, and be such as properly be-  
 longs to the two other heads of ex-  
 cepted Cases. As to the third instance  
 of Excepted Cases, the Evangelists  
 have sufficiently forewarn'd us not to  
 look upon any Mans Judgment as  
 Infallible in this matter, since they  
 have Recorded (<sup>k</sup>) those words of our  
 Saviour, where he tells his Disci-  
 ples, that the *Day and Hour of the Gene-*  
*ral Judgment was a secret God has re-*  
*served to himself*, and has not thought  
 fit to reveal it to any Creature of what  
 Rank or degree soever; *no not to the*

k Matt.

24. 36.

Mark 13.

32.



*Son himself*: and tho he were the great Prophet of the Church, yet 'twas no part of his Commission to reveal the Counsel of God in this matter: and therefore to be sure his Disciples would never pretend to know more than their Master.

Having thus considered the Cases in which the Apostles may be supposed to speak or write without Inspiration, I proceed in the

II. Place to shew, that *Excepting those Cases, the Apostles writ and spake by the particular Assistance and Direction of the Spirit.*

Our Author confines the Infallibility of their Preaching and Writing to those things which they *Learn'd from Christ, or related as spoken by him*<sup>1</sup>. / Fr. p. 256, 257.  
But as to the Arguments which they fram'd upon those Principles, and the Consequences they deduc'd from the Old Testament, here he supposes them to have used only their own Memory and Judgment, tho he grants these Discourses of theirs are to be received, because *there's nothing in them but what is conformable to the Doctrine of Christ and to right Reason, and nothing that can lead us into the Belief of what is false or contrary to Piety*<sup>m</sup>. This, as exactly as I can gather, is all the Authority he allows the Sermons and Writings of

the Apostles : and this indeed is as much Authority as can be given to any Humane Discourse, and tho it does not exclude all possibility, yet it excludes all likelihood of error. Mr. N. seems willing to grant that the Apostles were *Sound Divines*, as he phrases it, and men that understood the Doctrine which they were to teach others. But 'twill appear that a greater deference is due to their Authority, if we consider that they were design'd by God to be the Planters of Christianity, and the Founders of the Universal Church<sup>n</sup>, as it comprehends not only the Christians of the Apostolical Age, but likewise the Believers of all succeeding times. So our Saviour tells them, that *he had chosen and ordain'd them that they should go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain*, and after Ages should receive the benefit of their Labours. And in his Prayer before his Passion, he expresses the whole Body of Christians, by *those who should believe on him through the Apostles words<sup>p</sup>*. Accordingly the Apostles took care by their Writings to preserve the memory of what they taught, after their Decease<sup>q</sup>.

(m) See  
Eph. 2. 20.  
Revel.  
21. 14.  
(o) Jo. 15.  
16.

(p) Jo.  
17. 20.

(q) 2 Pet.  
1. 15.

But further, the Power of Miracles with which the Apostles were endued,

ed, was an Evidence of their General Commission from God to teach the World: those Supernatural Works gave them an Unlimited Authority over the Christian Church, as the Voice from Heaven Authorized our Saviour, when it said, (1) *Hear ye him*: they were a (r) Matt. Proof that the Divine Assistance accom- 17. 5. panied them in every thing they did or said under the Character, and with the Authority of Apostles: or else we must suppose that God would set his Seal to that which might possibly be disagreeable to his own Will. Without Question the Power of Miracles did Authorize every thing which the Apostles did or said in pursuance of their office of Teaching and Governing the Church, and justified their Divine Commission as far as they declared it to extend. And how far they supposed it to reach, it may not be amiss briefly to enquire.

St. Paul declares that the Holy Ghost constantly resided or dwelt (2) (s) 2 Tim. in himself and the rest of the Apostles 1. 13, 14. and Apostolical persons, whereby they were enabled firmly to retain the *Form of Sound Doctrine* themselves, and faithfully deliver it to others. In all Difficulties an Appeal was to be made to the Judgment of the Apostles, and even the Gifted persons themselves of that

that Age were bound to Submit to their Authority, and be guided by them in the Exercise of their Gifts: they declared that their Divine Commission as Teachers of the Church extended to their Writings as well as to their Preaching, and required the same Deference to be given to the former as was to the latter. As St. Paul says, *Christ speaks in me,*<sup>(u)</sup> and<sup>(w)</sup> *We speak the things of God in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth:* So he 2. 12, 13. no less expressly affirms that *the things which he writes are the Commandments of the Lord;* and enjoins the Thessalonians<sup>v</sup> to hold fast the Traditions which they have been taught, whether by word or his Epistle. For which Reason the Writings of the Apostles have ever since their own time been esteemed by the whole Body of Christians, as the Test of True and False Doctrine.

Further, the Scripture makes this the Characteristick of an Apostle, whereby he was distinguisht from the other Inspir'd persons who were then in the Church, viz. *that he did not learn the Gospel in an Humane way,* <sup>2</sup> but purely by Revelation. St. Paul might have been sufficiently instructed in the Gospel, by those who were Pillars in the Church<sup>2</sup>, so as to have been out of all likelihood either of mistaking any part

2. 1 Cor.

14. 37.

(u) 2 Cor.

13. 3.

(w) 1 Cor.

2. 12, 13.

x 1 Cor.

14. 37.

y 2. Thes.

2. 15.

2. 12, 13.

Gal. 1. 11.

compar.

with ver.

12. & 1.

v. 1 Cor.

2. 10.

a v. Gal.

2. 6, 9.

part of it himself, or leading others into error : but we see this way of Instruction was not sufficient to advance him to the Dignity of the Apostolate, and therefore Christ himself made a particular Revelation of the whole Gospel to him <sup>b</sup>, that he might not be *Inferior* in any respect to the <sup>supr. &</sup> *chiefest Apostles*. And since the Gospel was communicated to him and the rest of the Apostles by Divine Revelation, only that they might teach it to others, whether by Word or Writing, with the greater assurance and certainty, and without any danger of error, their Discourses which were design'd for the Instruction of the Church, must be the effects of this supernatural habit of Christian Knowledge, which God infus'd into their minds. I have shewed in this and in the former Chapter <sup>c</sup>, that the same Assistance accompanied the Apostles in their Writing which did in their Preaching, and therefore shall now speak of these two indifferently, and shew what kind of Authority the Apostles claim'd in either of them. St. Paul says <sup>d</sup> that God has revealed the deep things, and the Mysteries of the Gospel to the Apostles by the Spirit : which probably were the same things Christ told his Disciples, they were not able to bear while he

b v. Ubi

1 Cor.

11. 23.

Eph. 3.

3, 4.

c P. 27.

d 1 Cor.

2. 10.

was

- e John 16. 12. *was with them* \*. Such was particularly the *Doctrine of the Cross*, which St. Paul's Discourse chiefly relates to in that place <sup>f</sup>. These things St. Paul says <sup>g</sup> they spoke and taught others, and that too in the *Words which the Holy Ghost taught them*. Where the word *αὐτοὶ* comprehends their style <sup>h</sup> as well as their Arguments, and shews there's a greater regard to be had to the style of the Apostles, than our Author <sup>i</sup> is willing to allow, and even for that very Reason which he alledges as an Argument, why 'tis not dictated by the Spirit, *viz.* because 'tis plain and without any Affectation of Wit or Learning, and conform'd to the style of the Old Testament. For this style however *Negligent and Careless* our Author may think it <sup>k</sup>, the Apostles used by the direction of the Holy Ghost, as appears from this place. It follows immediately, *Comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual*, where the word *συγκρίσεις* may signify *Explaining, Illustrating* <sup>l</sup>, *i. e.* proving one Divine Revelation by another, the Revelations of the New Testament by those of the Old. At last the Apostle concludes <sup>m</sup>, *We have the mind of Christ*, and therefore ye are to hearken to us, and receive what we say, tho in many things not agreeing with the
- f 1 Cor. 1. 18, &c. & c. 2. 2.   
 g Ib. ver. 13.   
 h Ver. 1. & 4.   
 i v. loc. sup. citat. ad c. 1. Coroll. 2.   
 k Fr. p. 233.   
 En. p. 145.   
 l v. Grot. in locum.   
 m Ib. ver. 16.



the Principles of Philosophy, or Worldly Wisdom, which the Apostle in the Verses before<sup>n</sup> had undervalued, in comparison of the Gospel. In all<sup>n 1 Cor. 20, &c.</sup> which Discourse St. Paul plainly ascribes<sup>c. 2. 1, &c.</sup> his and the rest of the Apostles Preaching to the Instructions the Holy Ghost gave them, without making any restrictions, and particularly that part of it which consisted in drawing Consequences, and bringing Proofs from the Old Testament.

Again we find the same Apostle threatening those that despise his Advice, as *not despising man but God, who gave the Apostles his holy Spirit*<sup>o 1 Thes. 4. 8.</sup>; that they might teach with uncontrollable

Authority. And I think we may fairly conclude from hence, that St. Paul expected all his Precepts and Instructions should be submitted to, not meerly as coming from one of the Governours of the Church, but as having something more than Humane Authority, and being derived from the Spirit of God. For what he says in this place, tho it immediately respect only those Advices which are contain'd in the foregoing part of the Chapter, may by parity of Reason be applied to all other Apostolical injunctions: for as the words are general, and do not specify that the Apostle deliver'd these  
par-

particular Rules by an extraordinary  
 • Revelation, more than any others  
 which he elſewhere gives, ſo neither are  
 the Advices ſuch in their own Nature,  
 as require a greater degree of Inſpira-  
 tion to deliver them, than the other  
 Exhortations and Commands which  
 are every where to be found in the  
 Apoſtolic Writings. From whence  
 I conclude, we ought to look upon  
 thoſe Writings as a Divine Rule of  
 Faith and Practice, and that he who  
 deſpiſes or undervalues them, *deſpiſes*  
*not man, but God, who gave his holy*  
*Spirit to the Authors of them.* And  
 how far our Author may be guilty of  
 this fault, I leave it to God and his  
 own Conſcience to Judge. I proceed  
 to ſhew,

III. *That the Aſſiſtance which the Holy  
 Spirit gave to the Apoſtles did not conſiſt  
 only in refreshing their Memories, or Im-  
 proving their Natural Faculties, but  
 was in ſeveral reſpects a new degree of  
 ſupernatural Knowledge.*

Our Author is willing to believe,  
 as appears by the places <sup>p</sup> I have be-  
 fore cited, that the Aſſiſtance the  
 Holy Ghoſt gave to the Apoſtles,  
 did chiefly, and in a manner only conſiſt  
 in refreshing their memory, and recalling  
 to their mind what our Saviour had taught  
 them. And agreeably to this opinion  
 he

p Fr. p.

254.-257.

Eng. p.

66.--70.

he tells us <sup>q</sup>, that when our Saviour pro- q Fr. p.  
 mises his Disciples <sup>r</sup>, That the Holy 55. En.  
 Ghost shall teach them all things, and p. 67.  
 bring all things to their remembrance, <sup>r</sup> John  
*these latter words apparently explain the* 15: 26.  
*foregoing, as if the Holy Ghost's teach-*  
*ing them was nothing else but bring-*  
*ing to their remembrance what Christ*  
*had taught them formerly.*

But before I proceed to confute  
 this Conceit, it may not be amiss to  
 Observe, that the very Concessions  
 of our Adversary afford an Argument  
 to prove the Inspiration of the Gospel  
 History. For this very Consideration,  
*viz. That the Holy Ghost brought every*  
*thing that our Saviour had done and taught,*  
*into the Remembrance of the Apostles,*  
 proves that the same Holy Spirit as-  
 sisted the Evangelists in the writing of  
 the Gospels, and Instructed them in  
 each particular of that Relation which  
 they made of our Saviour's Life and  
 Doctrine. And St. John himself Ob-  
 serves, <sup>r</sup> that several Passages of our <sup>r</sup> Joh. 12.  
 Saviour's Life were not well understood 16.  
*by his Disciples, while he was with them,*  
 and what they did not comprehend  
 they did not well remember: but  
 when he was *Glorified*, and the Holy  
 Spirit was given, then these things  
 were perfectly brought again to their  
 Remembrance, and they understood  
 the

the Design of them, and their Agreement which the Ancient Prophecies. But to return to the Objection proposed.

*s* Matt.  
28. 20.

I deny not but that our Saviour declar'd to his Disciples *the whole Council of God*, and therefore when he gave them Commission to *go and teach all Nations*, he makes this the Rule they were to go by in Preaching, *viz. to teach whatever he had commanded them*, as containing the whole Doctrine of Christianity : but granting all this, yet 'twill appear from several instances, that the Assistance of the Spirit was something more than bringing to their remembrance what Christ had said unto them. For,

*u* Luke  
23. 30.  
Matt. 19.  
28.

1. *Some things our Saviour did not only not explain to them fully, but likewise made use of such Expressions when he spake of them, as were accommodated to the Notions the Apostles were prepossess'd with.* Thus when He discoursed to them of the Nature of his Kingdom, he made use of such Expressions as in their most natural and obvious Sense did imply, that it was to be a Temporal One: for he described the happiness which his Disciples were to enjoy in it, by *eating and drinking at his Table, and sitting upon twelve Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel*. Which

Which Expressions were accommodated to the currant Opinion of that Age, concerning the Worldly Grandeur of Christ's kingdom: our Saviour not thinking it a proper season as yet to wean them from these Opinions, which had taken such deep root in their minds, that they could not be extirpated all of a sudden, but must be removed by gentle and easie degrees. Now to give the Apostles a right understanding as to this matter, 'twas not sufficient the holy Spirit should recall to their memory the words which our Saviour had used upon this subject, for those alone would rather confirm them in the false Notions they had entertain'd concerning these things, than instruct them in the true one: but 'twas further requisite, that the Spirit should give them a clear and distinct apprehension of the Spiritual Nature of Christ's Kingdom, and wherein the Glory and Happiness it promises, consists: and should further inform them for what Reasons our Saviour chose in compliance with their apprehensions, and in conformity to the Style of the Old Testament, to wrap up these things in Obscurity, and discourse of them under the veil of Types and Figures. And I think this was to enlighten their minds

E

with

with a new of degree Supernatural Knowledge.

2. But besides those things which our Saviour concealed under Types and Figures, *There were others he obscurely Express'd in Parables.* As the Calling of the Gentiles in the Parable <sup>a</sup> of the Prodigal Son, and of the Householder that went out at the latter end of the Day to hire Labourers into his Vineyard. The rejection of the Jews under the Parable <sup>b</sup> of the persons invited to a Marriage Feast, who would not come. Several other instances of the same kind might be given. Now to understand these things perfectly, something more was requisite than just to remember our Saviour's words: as is plain by the Disciples asking our Saviour the meaning of another Parable of his, viz, *That of the tares, of the Field* <sup>c</sup>. The words they remembred perfectly well, but <sup>c</sup> were at a loss for the meaning and design of them, and therefore desir'd him to explain it to them. And by the same Reason there was need of a greater degree of Illumination, to certify them that the Gentiles were to be *Fellow-heirs, and partakers of the Promises of Christ*, than the bare putting them in mind of those short hints our Saviour had given them concerning this matter, would amount to. And accord-

\* Luk.

15. 11.

a Matt.

20. 5, 6:

b Matt.

22. 1.

c Matt.

13. 36. v.

c. 15. 15.



accordingly we find that *St. Peter* had need of a Vision<sup>d</sup> to instruct him in this *d Act. 10.* matter: and even that extraordinary Revelation seem'd scarce sufficient to convince him of this truth. For afterward, notwithstanding the Vision he had formerly seen, he relapsed again into his old notions, and separated himself from the Gentile-Converts at *Antioch*<sup>e</sup>. Which is a pregnant in-<sup>e Gal. 2.</sup> stance how much need the Apostles<sup>11.</sup> had of an extraordinary degree of Clearness and Evidence, fully to instruct and convince them in those points of Christianity that were opposite to the Opinions they had formerly embraced: and that something more was requisite to that purpose, than just to remember what our Saviour had said upon this Subject. For even that Vision it self did not fully explain to *St. Peter* God's Counsel and purpose, and 'tis likely he thought there was no more implied by it, than that he should receive those Gentiles, who voluntarily offer'd themselves. The<sup>f Acts 13.</sup> first that were sent to Preach the<sup>2. comp.</sup> Gospel to the Gentiles were *St.* with ver. 46. *Paul* and *St. Barnabas*, when the Holy<sup>g Rom.</sup> Ghost separated them for this purpose<sup>1. 11. 13.</sup>. And 'tis upon this Account that *St.* Gal. 2. 9. *Paul* calls himself<sup>e</sup> the Apostle of the Eph. 3. 1. Gentiles: and says in exprels terms<sup>1 Tim.</sup> that<sup>2. 7.</sup>

b Eph.  
3. 5, 6.

i 1 Cor.  
14. 6, 26,  
30.  
-- 2. 10.  
Eph. 1. 17.  
-- 3. 5.

that the Salvation of the Gentiles, by their being Incorporated into the Church, and making one Body with the Jews, was a Doctrine which was but then newly <sup>n</sup> REVEALED to the Apostles and Prophets by the SPIRIT. And we may observe that the same St. Paul sometimes expresses the Knowledge of the Gospel, with which the holy Spirit furnisht the Apostles, and Inspir'd persons of those times, by the word <sup>i</sup> *Αποκαλυψις*, to imply that in several respects, it was not so much a Revival of what our Saviour taught them while he was upon Earth, as a piece of Knowledge entirely new, and a distinct Revelation.

3. We may instance in another sort of true and proper Inspiration which belong'd to the Apostles; and that is, *The gift of Prophecy it self, and of applying the Prophecies of the Old Testament to the times of the Gospel, and shewing that they are truly fulfilled in Christ and his Church.*

k Fr. p.  
283. En.  
p. 113.

Our Author grants <sup>k</sup> that God immediately imparted to the Apostles those Prophecies which are to be found in their Writings, so that this point need not to be further Insisted upon. I proceed therefore to consider their gift of *Explaining the Prophecies of the Old Testament*, and applying them to the times of

of the Gospel. And here 'tis to be considered, that tho' our Saviour did explain many Prophecies to his Disciples after his Resurrection, concerning his own Sufferings and Exaltation, and the Preaching of the Gospel to all Nations<sup>1</sup>, yet there were several other Prophecies which they could not understand, till they were endued with Power from on High, and thereby enabled to comprehend the great Mysteries of God's Economy: Of which kind several Instances may be given: Such are the Apostles applying several Prophecies to Christ in the New Testament, which are spoken of God the Father in the Old: as also the Texts they made use of to prove that the *Rejecting of the Jews* and *Calling of the Gentiles* was foretold. And the Dispensations of the Old Testament which the Apostles apply to these purposes, viz. the Allegory of *Ismael* and *Isaac*<sup>m</sup>, of *Jacob* and *Esau*<sup>n</sup>, by which St. Paul illustrates this matter: the words of *Moses* in his *Song*<sup>o</sup>, which he applies to the same purpose<sup>p</sup>: as also the words of *Habakkuk*<sup>q</sup>. The explaining the *Mystical Sense* and Design of which, and such like Occurrences and Prophecies of the Old Testament, is to be reckon'd a peculiar gift bestowed upon the Apostles by

/ Luk. 24.

27. 15.

46, 47.

<sup>m</sup> Rom.<sup>o</sup> 7.<sup>p</sup> Gal. 4. 24.<sup>n</sup> Rom.<sup>q</sup> 9. 10. &c<sup>o</sup> Deut.

32. 21.

<sup>p</sup> Rom.

1. 19.

<sup>q</sup> Acts

13. 41.

the holy Spirit. 1. Because they themselves look upon it as such, as appears by St. Paul's reckoning *γινώσκω* among the *καλοῦμαι*; which word certainly signifies the gift of Interpreting the Mysteries of the Old Testament and applying them to the State of things under the New. 2. Because those *Providential Occurrences* had a secret and hidden design in them, which could be discover'd by none but God that order'd them: who as he comprehends the most distant Ages in one single view, so in his disposing and ordering the more Remarkable Events under the Old Testament, had all along an Eye to the times under the New. 3. As to the Prophecies, 'tis not likely that any persons without a Supernatural Illumination, could look to the end and utmost Completion of them, since the Prophets themselves had not this privilege granted them, as appears from those places, where the Gospel is called a *Mystery kept secret since the World began*: a *hidden Mystery*, and *hid from Ages and Generations*: And especially from those remarkable words of St. Peter; *Of which Salvation [by Christ] the Prophets have enquir'd and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto you, searching what and what manner*

1 Cor.  
12. 8.

Rom.

16. 25.

1 Cor. 2.

7.

Eph. 3. 9.

Colos.

1. 26.

1 Pet. 1.

10, 11, 12.

manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow: To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us they did Minister these things. From whence it appears, that tho' the Prophets were very Inquisitive after the Manner how, and the Time when their Prophecies should be fulfill'd, yet they had only this general Satisfaction, that they should not be fulfill'd in their own time. And I think we may infer from thence, that the perfect understanding them was reserv'd to the times of the Messias. And tho' the event would sufficiently Interpret the meaning of several of them, yet there were some that needed a greater Light than that to understand them, and apply them aright. To which we may add, that the manner of Interpreting the Prophecies of the Old Testament which the Apostles used, is a Rule to after Ages how they are to Interpret the Prophetical Writings, and prove the Truth of the Gospel by them: and therefore the same reasons which prove the Writings of the Apostles in general Divinely Inspir'd, because they are a standing Rule of Christian Faith, may be applied to that part of them which consists in explaining the Mysti-

cal Sense of the Old Testament Writings. But concerning the Mystical Sense of the Prophets, I shall have an opportunity to speak more fully in the next Chapter. And so much may suffice for the proof of the third general Head, viz. *That the Assistance which the holy Spirit gave the Apostles was something more than refreshing their Memories, and recalling to their minds what our Saviour had said unto them.* I proceed to shew

IV. *That the Apostles had an extraordinary Assistance when they were summon'd before Magistrates upon the account of their Religion: and to vindicate their Behaviour at that time from the unbecoming and Irreverent Reflections of this Author.*

One would think the words of our Saviour were plain enough in this point: *Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in the same hour what ye ought to say: for 'tis not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost,* says S. Mark, *the Spirit of your Father saith S. Mathew, speaks in you.* If this had been only a Spirit of Courage and Holiness arising from the Belief of the Gospel, as Mr. N. pretends, 'twould have requir'd a great deal of Care, Consideration and Reflection, to keep it warm upon their Hearts, that it might not cool when danger approached.

And

u Matt.

10. 19, 20.

Mark 13.

11.

w Fr. p.

241. Eng.

p. 44.



And our Saviour's precluding the use of Humane means, proves that it was something more than an ordinary Grace, which always requires the Co-operation of our Natural Faculties; and shews that 'twas as much a new Impulse which the Apostles were to feel upon their minds on such occasions, as any Prophetick Inspiration whatsoever. But notwithstanding the plain import of the words, rather than own an extraordinary Inspiration, the natural force of the words must be dwindled away into nothing, under the pretence of their being only a *Hebrew way of speaking*, like *The Spirit of jealousy, of slumber, &c.* which are found in the Old Testament. As if there was no difference in the nature of the Expression between the *Holy Ghost* or the *Spirit of the Father*, and the *spirit of jealousy* or *stupidity*. But this is the constant method of our *New Interpreters* of Scripture, [that don't care to believe any thing to be there, but what Natural Powers can effect, and Intellectual ones comprehend. When they are pressed with plain words of Scripture, they will not out of Good Manners, in downright terms deny their Authority, but think it more decent to evade it, by explaining away all the force of them, and alledg-

ing

x Fr. p.  
244. Eng.  
p. 49.

y Theol.

Polir. c. 6.

ing the *Metaphorical and Pompous* way of speaking, which the *Eastern Languages* use, which seems to imply a great deal more in it, than the Writer really design'd. Thus *Spinoza* tells us, that though there are wonderful stories told in the old Testament, yet that is no proof that the things themselves were Miraculous, or such as exceeded the power of Natural Agents, for the Jews loved to talk big, and make a great deal more of a story by their way of telling it than the matter of Fact really was. Just so the *Socinians* when they are pressed with plain Texts of Scripture for the Divinity or Satisfaction of Christ, make this their constant Refuge, *that the Hebrew Language is full of Metaphors*, and the Writers don't mean half so much as they say. Now this is an excellent device to render the Scriptures an insignificant Book, or which is much the same, make it say whatever these New Expositors please. But before this trick will pass, these Gentlemen should convince us, that since 'tis impossible to know the meaning of the Scripture by the words, 'tis they only have the secret of telling us its true Sense, and the Key to these Mystical Characters.

And here I shall take occasion to reflect upon another passage in these

Let-

Letters, which indeed belongs to the Subject treated of in the former part of this Chapter, viz. Concerning the Assistance of the Holy Ghost which our Saviour promised his Disciples: but being another Essay of our Author's dexterity in this new way of Interpreting Scripture, I chose to make my remarks upon it in this place. 'Tis his gloss upon that place of St. John<sup>s</sup>, He <sup>z Joh. 16.</sup> shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, &c. He <sup>13, 14, 15.</sup> observes that <sup>a Fr. p.</sup> "these words must be ex- <sup>254.</sup>  
 tremely figurative, because the Holy <sup>En. p. 66.</sup>  
 Ghost properly speaking, did not bear from  
 God or Jesus Christ that which he was  
 to Inspire the Apostles with. From  
 whence it must follow, (or else this  
 Observation of his is Impertinent) that <sup>b John</sup>  
 the words immediately foregoing <sup>16. 13.</sup>  
*When the Spirit of truth is come, he will*  
*guide you into all truth,* must be very Fi-  
 gurative too, and not imply that the  
 Spirit really taught the Apostles any  
 thing in a proper Sense. Now to pass  
 by this Consequence of his, viz. that  
 plain words are to be understood Me-  
 taphorically, because they are joyn'd  
 with words that have a Metaphor in  
 them: I can't but observe thus much  
 for the clearing the sense of this Text,  
 that our Saviour uses no other expres-  
 sions concerning the Holy Spirit here,  
 than



vour of all the Apostles<sup>d</sup>; in both *d Act. 5.*  
 which Cases the Apostles told the <sup>29.</sup>  
*Sanbedrim* to their faces, of their Hor-  
 rid Sin in Murdering the Messias, and  
 that there was no way to Salvation,  
 but by Believing in him whom they  
 had Crucified. The Event in both  
 these Cases seems to come up to the  
 highest Sense of our Saviour's Words:  
 and if we had an exact History of the  
 Sufferings of the Apostles, I do not  
 question but we should find many  
 more Proofs of the Accomplishment  
 of this Promise. † Since in those few † See  
 Remains that we have of the *Genuine* <sup>2 Tim. 4.</sup>  
*Acts* of the *Martyrs*, there are emi- <sup>6, 7, 8.</sup>  
 nent Instances of their Courage in *e v. Acta*  
 Professing the Truth, <sup>e</sup> which at First *Ignat. per*  
 Sight discover something more than *Usserium*  
 Humane, and may justly be look'd *Edit.*  
 upon as one of the greatest and most *Martyr.*  
 convincing Arguments of the Truth *Polycarpi*  
 of Christianity, and the Divine Pow- *ap. Euseb.*  
 er which accompanied its True Pro- *H. E.*  
 fessors. I am sure *Justin Martyr* <sup>l. 4. c. 15.</sup>  
 confesses that this very Argument prevail'd *Acta*  
 with him to embrace the Christian *Martyr.*  
 Religion. And if the Behaviour of *Lugd. &*  
 the Martyrs in aftertimes was so Ex- *Vienn.*  
 traordinary, we cannot think that the *Ibid. l. 5.*  
 Apostles were in this respect Inferiour *c. 1.*  
 to their Disciples. Now a man that *Cypriani*  
 had a real Concern for the honour of *Passio, o-*  
 our *peribus e-*  
*jus pr. c. ix.*  
*f Apol. 1.*

our Saviour and his Apostles, and was desirous to magnify the Power of God's Grace, and set it in the best Light he could, would not have pass'd over the Evidences for it, and only insisted upon those Instances, which he thought would lessen and obscure it.

But let us see whether the Instances he brings, do really so much lessen the Promise of our Saviour as he imagines: As for St. Paul's Behaviour in

g Act:

23. 3.

Fr. p

241.

Eng. p.

45.

i Gros.

Estius.

Bexa.

k Eng. p.

178.

Fr. p. 259.

i Luk. 13.

32.

m 2 Tim.

4. 17.

n Ubi su-

pra.

o see like

Instances,

Joh. 2. 19.

& ch. 11.

11.

the High Priest<sup>s</sup>, which is our Author's first Instance<sup>b</sup>, he cannot be ignorant

that some Expositors of the best Note<sup>c</sup>, as well as his Adversary Mr. Simon<sup>d</sup>,

understand those words of his, God shall smite thee thou whited wall, as spoken

by the Authority and in the Style of a Prophet, as our Saviour call'd He-

rod Fox<sup>e</sup>, and St. Paul call'd Nero Ly-

on<sup>m</sup>. And they that maintain this

Opinion, do not suppose that St. Paul in the next words beg'd Pardon, and

confess'd that he was to blame for what he said, as our Author takes for

granted that he did<sup>n</sup>. But they take

this to be the real Sense of the 5<sup>th</sup> v. tho purposely conceal'd under ambig-

uous Terms<sup>o</sup>, "I cannot believe or

own such a man to be High Priest,

who came into his Place by those ill

Arts as Ananias did, for if I had look'd

upon him as High Priest, I should

" not



not have transgressed the Law, in giving him such disrespectful Language. But if we understand the Place in the same Sense which Mr. N. does, and own the Apostle to have been surpriz'd by Passion, yet still there will appear evident Tokens of a Divine Assistance accompanying him, if we take an entire View of the whole history of his Sufferings at Jerusalem: With what an Undaunted Resolution he went thither, when he knew beforehand, *That Bonds and Afflictions did abide him, and did not value his Life, so he might finish his Course with joy*<sup>p</sup>. How he persisted in the <sup>p</sup> Act. 20. same Resolution, notwithstanding all <sup>23, 24.</sup> the Importunities and Tears of his Friends, being ready not only to be bound at Jerusalem, but also to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus: with what <sup>q</sup> Act. Courage he sets forth the Grounds of <sup>21. 14.</sup> his Conversion before the enrag'd Multitude: with what Authority he <sup>r</sup> Act. 22. Preach'd concerning the Faith in Christ, and the Fundamentals of Christianity to Felix, and laid his Sins so <sup>s</sup> Act. 24. home to him that he made him tremble: <sup>25.</sup> How powerfully he pleaded for himself and his Religion before Agrippa, <sup>t</sup> Act. 26. so as to make Impression upon the King himself, and almost persuade him to be a Christian. He that shall lay all these

these things together, will see Reason to admire the Power of God's Grace in St. Paul's Behaviour at Jerusalem: and will not think that that one Slip, if it were one, is able to obscure the Glory of all the other parts of it.

And as for that Prudential Act of St. Paul, which our Author says *"barb*  
*nothing of Inspiration in it, viz. his di-*  
*viding the Council"*, and thereby  
 making one half of them his Friends;  
 'twas exactly agreeable to our Savi-  
 our's Advice to the Apostles: *To use*  
*all Prudence that was consistent with Imo-*  
*cency*, as this certainly was. But be-  
 sides, it implied an excellent Argu-  
 ment *ad homines*, viz. to Jews, in be-  
 half of Christianity, namely, that it  
 was unreasonable for them to reject  
 that Religion, or persecute the Abet-  
 tors of it, whose great Design 'tis to  
 establish the Doctrine of the Resur-  
 rection, the Belief of which Point,  
 the chiefest of their own Sects for Re-  
 putation look'd upon as one of the  
 principal Articles of their Faith. And  
 therefore we find St. Paul, knowing  
 what force there was in it, insist again  
 and again upon the very same Apolo-  
 gy for himself. Nay God himself  
 approved of it, as appears by the Vision  
 which St. Paul had to encourage him  
 the very next night after his Appear-  
 ance

2 Fr. p.

242.

Eng. p.

46.

Act. 23.

6.

Math.

10. 16.

Act. 24.

15. c. 26.

6, 7.

c. 28. 20.

ance before the Council, by which our Lord himself gave Testimony to him, that he had witness'd a good Confession.

7 Act. 23.

But 'tis a wonder to me that our Author should think St. Stephen's Behaviour and Harangue <sup>a</sup> a proper Instance, to shew that the Apostles and primitive Confessors had no immediate Assistance of the Holy Ghost, when they appear'd before secular Magistrates. For if Courage to speak the Truth, and to back it with unanswerable Arguments, be a sign of an Extraordinary Assistance, certainly no person ever gave greater Evidence of it than St. Stephen. To declare publickly that the *Temple and its Worship should shortly be destroy'd*, was such <sup>c</sup> an Invidious Truth, that the Apostles themselves did not think fit at first to speak it openly, but shew'd a great respect to the establish'd Worship, by constantly attending upon it. <sup>d</sup> The Dissolution of the Mosaical Economy, <sup>d</sup> being a Truth that the new Converts from Judaism were not yet able to bear. But even this Truth St. Stephen had the Boldness to profess, and mainrain'd it too by a continued series of Argument, from *Abraham* whom the Jews boasted to be their Father, down to the building of the Temple.

11.

a Fr. p.

243.

Eng.

48, 49.

b Act. 7.

c Act. 6.

14.

d Act. 3.

1.-18. 21.

20. 16.

21. 26

F

Wherein

Wherein he shews that the Patriarchs and Founders of the Jewish Nation, were accepted by God before the Temple or its Service had a Beginning: nay that *Moses* himself the Institutor of this Worship, prophesied of *Christ*<sup>e</sup>, and design'd the Tabernacle only for a *Pattern of Heavenly things*<sup>f</sup>. Besides this *St. Stephen* all along made Reflections upon the stubborn and refractory Temper of the Jews from the beginning, and told them that their Rejecting and Murdering of *Christ* when he came, was but agreeable to their usage of the Prophets who foretold him<sup>g</sup>. I think he that said these things had the Gift of *Παρησια*, which the Apostles pray'd for<sup>h</sup>, in a great measure. And tho' our Author is pleas'd to say, <sup>i</sup> that *St. Stephen* mentions divers Circumstances of History which were nothing to the purpose, yet for my part I must declare I see none but what are necessary to make it a full and Complete Narrative, or else serve to set forth the ill manners of the Jews under the several Dispensations of Providence. And I am apt to think *St. Luke* was of the same mind: for abstracting from his Divine Character, he was too Judicious a man to trouble himself or his Reader, with a Rehearsal of impertinent Circumstances. I

<sup>e</sup> Acts 7.

37.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid

ver. 44.

<sup>g</sup> Ib. ver.

52.

<sup>h</sup> Acts 4.

29.

<sup>i</sup> Ubi

supr.

am sure there are several particulars which are of great use to explain the Writings of *Moses*<sup>k</sup>, which we could never have known, if this Discourse had not been preserv'd. This Gentleman may call these *Impertinencies* if he pleases, but I believe few will follow him in this bold and Unscholar-like Censure, and 'tis well St. *Luke* was of another mind, for we should have had a great Loss, if he had not preserved them. And as for those particulars which he says<sup>1</sup> *cannot be reconciled with the History of the Old Testament*<sup>m</sup>, if St. *Luke* made these Mistakes, they have been accounted for above<sup>n</sup>: 7. 16. if St. *Stephen* himself did, I suppose the same Defence that is made for a Writer, will hold more strongly for a Speaker. And tho we suppose St. *Stephen* to have been full of the Holy Ghost when he spake<sup>o</sup>, yet there's no reason the Spirit should dictate a History to him, which he was before so well acquainted with. And why may we not say, that although the Holy Spirit were so remarkably present with him at this time, that the Glories which were shed forth upon his Soul, shin'd thro his Body, and made his face look like the face of an Angel<sup>p</sup>, yet the Holy Ghost thought fit not to supply the Defect of his Memory.

<sup>k</sup> Acts 7.  
20,--26.

<sup>1</sup> Ubi  
supr.

<sup>m</sup> Acts  
7. 16.

<sup>n</sup> Supr.  
p. 40, 41.

<sup>o</sup> Acts 6.  
10.-7. 55.

<sup>p</sup> Acts  
6. 15.

mory in one or two particulars, to shew that Inspir'd persons, even in their Brightest Minutes, are still but men, and that the *Excellency might appear to be of God*, and not of themselves?

What has been said is sufficient to shew what little ground there is for this Author's unworthy Reflections, upon the Behaviour of the First Christians before the Heathen Tribunals; wherein he seems not only to attack two or three Passages of Scripture, but to endeavour to overthrow one of the principal Arguments for the Truth of Christianity: for certainly never was there greater Evidence of a Divine Power present with its Professors, than when they were summon'd before the Magistrates, to give a reason of the Hope that was in them.

I proceed in the V<sup>th</sup>. place, to Answer the Objections which he has advanc'd against the Inspiration of the Apostles.

I. The first which I shall take notice of is, *The Apostles Disputing and Conferring with each other, before they came to a Resolution at the Synod of Jerusalem* <sup>a</sup> which he thinks was needless among persons Inspir'd. As likewise that *Prophets should submit what they say, to the judgment of other Prophets, according to St. Paul's order.*

g Fr. p.  
248, 249.  
Eng. p.  
57.  
r 1 Cor.  
14. 29.

But



But the force of this Objection will be taken away, if we consider that God distributed his Gifts to each person severally as he thought fit: so that *1 Cor.* even the greatest Apostles might think *12. 11.* it necessary to advise with their Brethren in matters of Consequence, where the Edification and Peace of the whole Church was nearly concern'd. And indeed one reason why God gave his Spirit by Measure to them seems to be this, that he design'd to engage all the Members of the Church into a strict Union and Alliance with each other by this means, because they stood in need of one another's help and direction: and *the eye could not say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you: i. e. the more* *Ibid.* Eminent Members of the Church very *v. 21.* often stood in need of the assistance and Direction of the Inferior and less considerable ones. And accordingly we find the Apostles and Heads of the Church were inform'd by the Inferiour and more ordinary Members of it, of several particulars they were ignorant of before: so *Agabus* inform'd St. Paul of his sufferings at *Jerusalem*, and the *Holy Ghost* *" Act. 21.* witness'd the same in every City, *no* *11.* *x Act. 20.* doubt by persons of a much Inferi-  
23.

1 Cor.  
12. 25.

2 Matth.  
18. 20.

or station in the Church than St. Paul himself. Thus the distribution of Spiritual Gifts in different Measures and Degrees, was very effectual to prevent *Schism in the Body* of the Church, and to oblige the *Members to have the same care one for another*. And we may observe to this purpose, that our Saviour made an especial promise of his presence among his Disciples, *where two or three are gather'd together*, to engage them thereby to preserve the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, and not to forsake the *Assembling themselves together*. And as by their exercising their gifts in the publick Assemblies, each Man's private gifts were produced in Common, and made serviceable to the Church in general: so this prevented false Prophets creeping in among them, because they would presently be detected. Whereas if private Prophecy had been in use, an Impostor might have took his opportunity, and by imposing upon the weaker sort, have got such a reputation, before the Cheat could have been discovered, that it would have been difficult afterward to have convinc'd Men of the Imposture. But by making every one that pretended to Inspiration under-

go a publick Tryal, a false Prophet could not hope to escape long without being convinc'd by all and judg'd by all. And this shews the reasonableness of that Command of St. Paul's, that the Prophets should submit what they say to the judgment of their Brethren<sup>a</sup>: for since from the very beginning there were False Prophets and deceitful Workers, who indeavour'd to transform themselves into the true Apostles and Messengers of Christ<sup>a</sup>; the Apostles thought fit to lay down Rules for the Trying of spirits<sup>b</sup>: and the discerning of spirits was a particular Gift design'd for this purpose<sup>c</sup>. Now the fittest way of doing this, was by the joint advice of the Governours of the Church assembled together, as we find the Bishops of Asia meeting together, discovered the falseness of Montanus and his Followers pretences to Prophecy<sup>d</sup>. To all which we may add that besides the usefulness of this method to secure the Church against Impostures, it has this further advantage in it, that what several Inspir'd persons did agree in, brought along with it greater evidence of its coming from God, than if it had been deliver'd only by one. For tho every thing which comes from God, deserves e-

1 Cor.  
14. 29.

2 Cor.  
11. 13.

1 Cor.  
12. 3.

1 Joh. 4.  
1. &c.

1 Cor.  
12. 10.

cv. Euseb.

H. E. l. 5.  
16. 19.

b v. Cl.  
Dodwell.  
Prole-  
gom. in  
Dissert.

Iren. n.  
6. 9. &  
in Iren n.  
Diff. 2.  
26.

c 1 Cor.  
12. 28.  
d 1 Cor.  
14. 37.

e Joh. 5.  
33.

f Joh. 8.  
17, 18.

qual Credit in *It self*, yet there may be greater Evidence to *Us* of the Divine Original of one Doctrine, than of another<sup>b</sup>. And as there were greater and more evident proofs of the Divine Mission of the Apostles, than of the Prophets, in the Christian Church, and therefore the Apostles had the Precedence of the Prophets<sup>c</sup>; and the Prophets were to submit to their Orders and Regulate their gifts by their Injunctions<sup>d</sup>, tho' what a true Prophet spoke was as much the word of God as what an Apostle did: so in like manner, that which was confirm'd by the concurring Testimony of Two or three Inspir'd Witnesses, brought greater evidence of its Divine Authority, than that which relyed wholly upon the Credit and Integrity of One, because two or three were less liable to mistake than one. And therefore we find our Saviour himself argues from the common Sentiments of Men, and appeals to the concurring Testimony of *John*<sup>e</sup> as a Corroborating Evidence, tho' his Miracles sufficiently proved the truth of his Mission: nay he reckons that the joint Testimony of his Father and himself is more credible, (Humanely speaking) than either of them singly. And

And what has been said concerning Inspir'd persons of an Inferior Rank, holds true of the Apostles themselves: for tho I make no question, but the Holy Ghost was always so far present with them, as to guide and direct them in all matters that were of Consequence, such as that was which gave occasion to the Synod at *Jerusalem*: yet to make them capable of this Assistance, we must suppose that they observ'd those Rules of our Saviour, which were necessary Conditions in order to the procuring this Assistance, one which as I have observ'd already, was their Assembling together when they had opportunity, and where the Case concern'd the whole Church in general. And since the Apostles themselves did but *know in part*, and *prophecie in part*, and consequently might receive further Light 13. 9. from others; what the whole College of Apostles agreed in, came with greater Authority and Evidence of its being God's Will, than what was deliver'd by one Apostle only. Just as we are more assur'd of the Truth of those Doctrines which are often repeated by different Writers in the Holy Scripture, than of those which

which are only mention'd by one: because the Authority of several Writers adds weight to the matter it self, and the comparing them together prevents our mistaking the sense of the Scripture concerning it; whereas what is but once mention'd is more liable to Ambiguities, and the Sense of it more easily mistaken. From what has been said, I hope it appears that there is sufficient reason why Inspir'd persons should consult each other; and that this is no prejudice to their Inspiration.

Fr. p.  
249.  
Eng. p.  
58.

2. The second Objection is, *That the Holy Ghost which the Apostles received on the day of Pentecost had not taught them all they ought to know, so far was it from rendering them at first dash Infallible, so that St. Peter needed a Vision to learn that he ought not to scruple Preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles.*

I do not know any body that ever yet maintain'd that the Spirit once for all instructed the Apostles in all things that were needful for the Discharge of their Office. And our Author might as well conclude, that the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost its self was needless, because our Saviour had already imparted the Holy Spirit to his Apostles, when he

\* Joh. 20. breathed on them, and said, \* Receive



*the Holy Ghost.* 'Tis certain several things were reveal'd to them by Degrees, and in proportion to the Exigencies of the Church: and this Author himself owns as much, when he tells us, "*That the Apostles had* Fr. p.  
 "MANY Immediate Revelations and 252.  
 "DIVERS Heavenly Visions. And Eng. p.  
 as for the Descent of the Holy Ghost 62.  
 upon them, in a visible manner on the day of Pentecost, the chief Design of that was publicly to Authorize them to preach the Gospel, and to Initiate them into the Body of Christ's Church, which was then founded; and to do this by more solemn Tokens of the Divine Presence among the first Professors, than any other Institution could ever pretend to: according to what the *Baptist* foretold", and our Saviour promised", that *John* indeed baptized, or admitted Profelytes with the bare Ceremony of *Water*, (which had been a Rite made use of by the Jews long before upon such occasions) but the *Apostles* should be Baptized or admitted into the Church with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

3. The third Objection is, that  
 "When the Dispute arose whether the  
 "Gentiles that were Converted were to be  
 "Circumcised or not, tho St. Paul and St.  
 "Barnabas were against this, yet their  
 "Authority

a Fr. p.

248.

Eng. p.

57.

"Authority was not sufficient to put to  
 silence the Judaizing Christians, which  
 "was a sign they did not look upon them as  
 "Infallible. To the same purpose he  
 b Fr. p. urges, "The Believers that were of the  
 249. "Circumcision contending with St. Peter  
 Eng. p. "for going to men uncircumcised and con-  
 58. "versing with them".  
 c Act. 11. To begin with the latter part of the  
 2, 3. Objection: to the instance of St. Peter  
 I answer, that the Converts of the  
 Circumcision were thoroughly perswad-  
 ed that the Laws and Institutions of  
 Moses were of perpetual Obligation, and  
 therefore 'tis no wonder if at first they  
 were surpriz'd to see any of them laid  
 aside, and a door open'd to let in the  
 Gentiles to the same Privileges with  
 the Jews, and to take away that Dis-  
 crimination which the Law makes be-  
 tween the Jews and the rest of the  
 world. And since this Action of  
 St. Peter's touch'd them so nearly in  
 their Privileges and Prerogative, or  
 at least was contrary to the Traditions  
 they had received from their Teachers,  
 and held as sacred as the Law it self\*,  
 'tis no wonder they were not easily  
 satisfied about it, till they examin'd  
 the reasons upon which St. Peter acted  
 in this matter. And the Apostles ne-  
 ver laid so much stress upon their In-  
 fallibility, as to require their Disciples

\* Matt.

15. 2.

Mar. 7. 3.

Joh. 18.

28.

to believe them upon their own word, as  
 Mr. N. himself observes : or without <sup>e</sup> Fr. p.  
 demanding a reason why they did so. <sup>283.</sup>  
 But if we should grant all this Objecti- <sup>Eng. p.</sup>  
 on contends for, certainly 'tis but a <sup>112.</sup>  
 weak Argument that the Apostles  
 were not Infallible, because some new  
 Converts <sup>f</sup> did not think so, who 'tis <sup>f</sup> See Mr.  
 plain did not well understand the Prin- <sup>Dodwell</sup>  
 ciples of their own Religion, and had <sup>of Schism</sup>  
 not as yet intirely submitted to the <sup>ch. 19.</sup>  
 Authority of the Apostles. And by <sup>sect. 18,</sup>  
 the same reason we may argue that <sup>19.</sup>  
 our Saviour was not Infallible, (which  
 yet Mr. N. himself looks upon <sup>g</sup> as a <sup>Fr. p.</sup>  
 certain Truth) because his Disciples <sup>257, 260.</sup>  
 seem not to be satisfied sometimes of <sup>281.</sup>  
 the Truth of what he says <sup>h</sup>, and de- <sup>Eng. p.</sup>  
 mand of him a reason <sup>i</sup> of those <sup>70, 75,</sup>  
 Doctrines of his that look'd like Pa- <sup>109.</sup>  
 radoxes to them. <sup>b</sup> Matth.

A great deal of what has been said <sup>i</sup> Matth.  
 will hold much stronger in the case <sup>15. 15.</sup>  
 of St. Paul and Barnabas <sup>k</sup>: for the <sup>k</sup> A&T. 15.  
 admitting the Gentiles into the Church  
 without Circumcision, must needs be  
 thought a great Violation of the Law  
 of Moses, by those that look'd upon it  
 to be of perpetual Obligation in the  
 Church of God. To which may be  
 added, that St. Paul and Barnabas had  
 not so clear and Indisputable an Au-  
 thority as the rest of the Apostles:

not

not being of the number of the Twelve, whose Commission was so solemnly seal'd and ratified on the day of *Pentecost*. And they who were of a different Perswasion from them, would in all likelyhood lay hold of this Objection against their Authority, as Men are willing to take advantage of any Exception to an Authority that is against them. And accordingly we find in after times, when the Judaizing Christians found St. Paul zealous in asserting the Liberties of the Gentile Converts, and teaching men every where to *Apostatize* from *Moses*, as they term'd it<sup>1</sup>, that they did what they could to lessen his Authority, and represented him as far Inferiour to the rest of the Apostles, and therefore that no great stress was to be laid upon his Doctrine, which forc'd him to vindicate himself and his Apostleship at large, *Galat. 1. and 2. Chapters.*

ἡ ἀποστασία  
ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως.  
κεν.  
Act. 21.  
21.

m Fr. p.  
250.  
Eng. p.  
60.  
n Gal. 2.  
11.

4. The fourth Objection is, <sup>m</sup> St. Peter's *Disimulation* at *Antioch*, for which St. Paul reprov'd him, as he tell us<sup>n</sup>.  
And here I agree with our Author, that St. Peter acted contrary to his Judgment, and disssembled his Opinion: for he that had been warned by a Vision<sup>o</sup>, that he should not call any man common  
or

o Act. 10.  
28.

or *unclean*, and but just before had  
 a great hand in making the Decree  
 at the *Synod of Jerusalem*<sup>p</sup>, where *p* Act. 15.  
 by the Gentiles were made Mem-<sup>7.</sup>  
 bers of the Church upon even terms  
 with the Jews, without taking the  
 Yoke of the Law upon them: he  
 after all this could not be really per-  
 swaded in his judgment, that he  
 ought not to keep company with the  
 Gentile Converts: tho his former pre-  
 judices might put some weight into  
 into the opposite Scale, and make  
 him doubtful and wavering. Which  
 might make his fear of displeasing  
 the Jewish Christians and giving them  
 offence, work more powerfully upon  
 him, and prevail with him to comply  
 with them in this matter: and St.  
*Paul* expressly assigns his *fearing* [to  
 offend] *them of the Circumcision*<sup>a</sup>, as *q* Gal. 2.  
 the cause of this his Behaviour. But <sup>12.</sup>  
 tho this be not a sufficient Reason why  
 any man should dissemble the Truth,  
 yet we may observe from St. *Jam*'s  
 Advice to St. *Paul*, 'that the Apost-<sup>r.</sup> Act 21.  
 les were very tender of giving any <sup>20:</sup>  
 offence to the Jewish Converts, who  
 were very 'numerous, and whom *ἡ μὲν*  
 they justly look'd upon as the most *ἡ δὲ*, Act.  
 considerable part of the Church, and <sup>21. 20.</sup>  
 as it were the Elder Brethren, ha-  
 ving a precedent Right to the Promi-  
 ses

Act. 3. 26. 15. 27. 2. 14. 15. 5. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 7. 7 Fr. p. 260. Eng. p. 75.

les before the Gentiles : This may be pleaded for an Excuse in behalf of St. Peter, tho still we must confess as St. Paul tells us *" that he did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, in this matter. And neither the Apostles themselves, nor any in their behalf, ever pretended that they were exempt from sin : but on the contrary, we find them freely own themselves to be men of like Passions with others "* : and that they *had this Treasure [of the Gospel] in earthen vessels "*, and were of the same make with other men. And therefore, since as our Author truly says *" He alone is endow'd with an absolute Infallibility, who is incapable of sinning, I do freely grant that we are no further assur'd that the Apostles were free from Error, than we find them free from Sin, which naturally leads men into it. I own likewise that this Instance of St. Peter, is a good Argument against the perpetual Inspiration or Infallibility of the Apostles, if we mean any more by it, than an habitual Knowledge of Divine Truth : for I cannot think St. Peter was under the immediate Conduct of the Holy Spirit, when he was guilty of this Behaviour. But I suppose the Apostles might have such an Assistance as was abundantly sufficient*



biant to answer all the Necessities of  
 the Church, without being always  
 under the immediate Influence of the  
 Holy Ghost, which must make them  
 Impeccable as well as Infallible. I  
 am apt to think that the Extraordinary  
 Assistances of the Spirit thus far agreed  
 with the Ordinary ones, that the per-  
 sons endowed with them were bound  
 to *stir up the Grace of God which was in*  
*them* by Care and Diligence; or else  
 the Greatest Gifts would not effectual-  
 ly preserve them from Sin and Error.  
 And he that considers the Case of *Ju-*  
*das how he fell by his transgression*, per-  
 haps will be of my mind. But as to  
 the Case before us, we have reason to  
 admire God's Providence and Care  
 over his Church, for so ordering it,  
 that St. Paul should be upon the place  
 to interpose and put a stop to this ill  
 Conduct, that might else have been  
 of dangerous Consequence, and made  
 a Breach in the Church that would  
 not easily have been made up. And  
 humanely speaking, 'tis not likely  
 that St. Peter who had such a Preemi-  
 nence in the Church, would have  
 yielded to a less Authority than that  
 of St. Paul's. From whence too may  
 further appear of what use 'twas even  
 for Inspir'd persons to consult with  
 each other, and act by common Ad-

vice: which Point I have explained and  
 \* P. 88. prov'd at large above \*.

5. The next Exception I shall take  
 a Fr. p. notice of is this: Mr. N. tells us <sup>a</sup>,  
 258, 259. *that the Gift of Wisdom and Knowledge,*  
 Eng. p. *or the Gift of Prophecy, which he*  
 72, 73, *makes all one with the two former,*  
 74. *was a Disposition of mind which God*

*sometimes infused into those on whom he*  
*bestowed it: whereby they became fit to*  
*instruct, and that it did not consist in an*  
*immediate Inspiration of what they were*  
*to say. His Reasons for this are two:*

1. *Because this Gift might be improved*  
*by Study and Reading, as he proves*  
*from 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14. 2. Because the*  
*Apostle gave directions to the Prophets,*  
*and order'd them to exercise their Gifts*  
*by turns, to prevent that Confusion*  
*which the disorderly Use of their*  
*Gifts had brought into the Church* <sup>b</sup>.

b 1 Cor.  
 14.

*Now he thinks that if the Spirit had*  
*Inspir'd them with what to say, he would*  
*likewise have given them directions as to*  
*the time and place.*

Now methinks he that can con-  
 found the Gifts, of *Wisdom, Knowledge*  
*and Prophecy*, which any Man that  
 consults the place where St. Paul  
 reckons up the several Gifts of the  
 Spirit, <sup>c</sup> will see are distinct, and takes  
 no notice of the Ambiguity of the  
 word *Prophecy*, which is taken in fe-  
 veral

c 1 Cor.  
 8, 9.

veral Senses in Scripture : I say he that confounds things, that any one who has studied the places of Scripture which treat of the Gifts of the Spirit, must needs know to be very different, need not have been so nice as to distinguish between "*a Disposition of mind infus'd into those upon whom God bestowed it, whereby they became fit to Instruct, and an Inspiring them with what to say.* For certainly this *Disposition infused into the mind,* if it mean any thing, must mean God's giving Men a clear and distinct apprehension of what they were to teach others ; and I think this is much the same as Inspiring them with what to say, since *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,* and words are only the Expressions of our thoughts : unless our Author supposes, that when God Inspires a Man with what to say, he only puts so many words into his mouth, without conveying any Idea of the things themselves to his mind. But let us proceed to examine his reasons.

As to the First, I see no inconvenience in asserting, that God very often increas'd or withheld his Extraordinary Gifts, in proportion to the Industry of the Possessors. For since the Extraordinary and Ordinary Gifts

agree in this, that they are both design'd to assist our Natural Faculties, not to supersede them, and to encourage our Industry, not to slacken it, I can't see why that Rule of our Saviour's, *To him that has shall be given, and from him that has not, i. e.* does not improve and make a good use of what he has, *shall be taken away*<sup>d</sup>, may not be applied to the Extraordinary Gifts as well as to the Ordinary: and why Men might not hope God would bestow these Gifts upon them in a greater degree, as a reward of their Industry; and might not have reason to fear he should withdraw them, if they took advantage from thence to be negligent. And thus much seems to be implied in that advice of St. Paul<sup>e</sup>, *Not to quench the Spirit*, viz. that God may be provok'd to take away these Gifts, when he sees them abus'd: Or Men's sins may render them Unworthy to be the Instruments of the holy Spirit. The story of the *Ethiopian Eunuch* who was Reading the Prophet *Isaiah*<sup>f</sup>, and to whom God sent *Philip* to instruct him may not unfitly illustrate this matter. Perhaps the utmost diligence the *Ethiopian* could use, would never have given him a clear Understanding of that place of the Prophet: but  
God

d Matth:  
13. 12.

e 1 Thess.  
5. 19.

f Act. 8.

God to reward his Industry, sent him an Inspir'd Interpreter to instruct him in the meaning of it. And in like manner God may reward Men's Natural endeavours to find out the truth, with such degrees of Knowledge as are Supernatural. Nor does Mr. N. instance of the *Miraculous Gift of Curing Diseases*, which he says *can't be increas'd by Application of Mind*, come up to our case. For curing Diseases after the manner the Apostles did, is a Power perfectly beyond the Sphere of Humane ability: whereas the Gifts we speak of, being of an Intellectual Nature, are most of them in some measure adequate to the Faculties of the Soul and in some degree attainable by Industry; so that in this case what is Miraculous in one Man, may be Natural in another. For Example, the Gift of speaking in a strange Language was Miraculous in the Apostles, but would not be so in a Man that should get the perfect command of the same Language by industry. For the illustration of this point, I will put this case, *viz.* of two men, one of them arriv'd to a good degree of Learning by study, and the other Illiterate: supposing these two to have equal skill in expounding Scripture; this gift would be thought to proceed from

Natural causes in the Former, but would be miraculous in the Latter : now putting this Case, 'tis no Incongruity to suppose that God should afterward reward the Industry of the Former, with a degree of Infus'd Knowledge, as much above the Supernatural Endowments of the Latter, as his Natural Talents and acquir'd Knowledge are above the others. For my part I can see no absurdity in supposing, that God may encourage Men to improve their Natural Talents as much as they can, by promising them a proportionable increase of Supernatural Knowledge. For this, as has been observ'd before<sup>h</sup>, is God's constant method, to make use of Natural means as far as they will go, and then to supply as much as he thinks fit over and above.

2. As to his Second Reason, which is taken from the *Directions the Apostle gives to Spiritual persons*, 1 Cor.

14. tis plain by that very Chapter, that the Spirit usually left Gifted Men to themselves, to exercise their Gifts as they thought fit: for the Apostle tells them<sup>i</sup>, *that the Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets*: and from several places of the same Chapter<sup>k</sup> it appears, that Men spake in in Unknown Tongues in their Assemblies,

*h* Supr. p.  
33, 34.

*i* 1 Cor.  
14. 32.

*k* Vers. 5.  
12, 13,  
&c.



blies, when there was no body present that understood the Language they spake in. Which certainly they would never have done, if they had been under the immediate direction of the Spirit as to the use of their Gifts. And the speaking with Tongues Mr. N. himself owns to be a proper kind of Inspiration, / Fr. p. but says <sup>1</sup> *that when they thus abus'd* 267. *their Gifts they did not speak by immediate Inspiration, but had the same command of those Languages, as if they had Learn'd them from their Infancy:* Eng. p. as if a Supernatural Habit were not 87. as much a Gift, as a single Act. And this likewise shews that the Inspiration of the Gifted Men in the Primitive Church, consisted \* rather in \* See Job. a constant and permanent Faculty, 14. 16. habitually residing in their mind, and exerting it self, either as they were <sup>m</sup> Act, 4. moved by the Holy Ghost <sup>m</sup> or as 8, 31. they themselves thought fit <sup>n</sup>, than in <sup>n</sup> Act. 17. such a kind of Inspiration as the 16. -18. Prophets had, which was often discontinued and interrupted: which 5. was the reason the Latter never spake till they felt a new Impulse, and therefore usher'd in what they were about to say, with *Thus saith the Lord*, and left off when that Impulse ceased. And this difference between the Pro-

phetical Inspiration of the Old Testament, and the Apostolical of the New, is a sufficient reason why the Apostles never begin their Exhortations or Instructions with, *Thus saith the Lord*, which yet is thought a good Argument by *Spinoza* \* against the Inspiration of the Apostolical Writings: tho I think 'tis a very weak one; for the prefixing their Names before their Epistles, \* gives them sufficient Authority, and a just Title to Inspiration.

And now I have run through the most considerable Objections which this Author has rais'd against the Inspiration of the Apostles. I think 'tis hardly worth while to spend time in Refuting other little Cavils, as, "*that the Apostles never speak with the same Authority as Christ did, but declare they say nothing of themselves, and refer all to Christ: for surely 'tis enough for Disciples to speak in the Name of their Master, and 'tis equivalent to the Phrase of the Prophets, Thus saith the Lord. And the same Argument if it prove any thing, will hold against the Inspiration of Christ himself,*" because he says, *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me: and As the Father gave me Commandment, so I speak.*

o Theol.  
Polit. c.  
XI.

\* See Gal.  
1. 1.

p Fr. p.  
251, 252.  
Eng. p.  
61, 62.

q John  
7. 16,  
7-12. 49,  
50.

Mr.

Mr. N. multiplies Cavils about the *Synod of Jerusalem*, some of which I (Fr. p. 252, 253. have answer'd already and have shew'd that there were several reasons why the Apostles should meet together about this weighty affair. To which I shall here add one more, viz. that they met thus to give a Precedent and be an Example to Future Ages, of settling Church Affairs by the Common advice of *Councils* and *Synods*. Eng. p. 63, 64. P. 87, &c.

I shall not pursue all the Critical Remarks he makes upon the style of their *Synodical Letter*: for if their own express words, [ *It seem'd good to the Holy Ghost and to us* ] will not persuade him that the Apostles thought themselves Assisted with the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost in that affair, I despair of convincing him by any thing I can say. Nor does it follow from hence, that all the persons present were inspir'd: for since the Apostles presid'd over the Assembly, and the Determination was wholly left to them, if they were Inspir'd, it was sufficient to stamp a Divine Authority upon the Determination it self, tho it were publish'd in the name of the whole Assembly. But 'tis pity the Apostles had not had some such able Critick as our Author

x *Casaub.*  
ad Act.  
10, 33.

thor among them, to direct them how to word their Epistle, and if Mr. N. had been *Secretary* to the Council, no doubt it would have been drawn up with much more Exactness: tho as great a Critick as himself\*, is of Opinion that ~~in reality~~ in the Conclusion of the *Letter*, which he finds so much fault with, is for all that a very elegant Expression. He has printed the Close of this Synodical Epistle in great Letters, as if it had something more than ordinary in it, and were a manifest argument of his side; but as big as the words look, whoever considers them will find there's very little sense in his Application of them.

### CH AP. III.

#### *Concerning the Inspiration of the P R O P H E T S.*

**I** Do not see much in our Author that reflects upon the Authority or Inspiration of the *Prophets*: But since I am engag'd in the Subject of Inspiration, and those persons who have no great esteem for the Sacred Books, fancy there are many things relating to the Prophets liable  
to

Exception, I think it will not be altogether impertinent or beside my main Design, which is to *Vindicate the Authority of the Holy Writings*, if I take a short View of those Considerations which tend to establish the Authority of the *Prophets*, and to answer some of the most Popular Objections against them. I shall therefore,

- I. Consider the Personal Qualifications of the *Prophets*.
- II. I shall consider the chief Design of their *Prophecies*.
- III. I shall resolve some Difficulties which relate to the *Prophets themselves*, or their manner of Writing.

I. As to the first: 'twould in a great measure take off mens Prejudices against the propheticall Writings, if they would but consider what manner of Men the *Prophets were*, and what excellent Qualifications they were indowed with. Men that are glad of any Argument that makes Religion look like a Cheat, think they have a great Advantage against all sorts of Prophecy, because there have been so many Cheats of this kind: and they find that usually the persons that pretend to a Prophetick Spirit, are in all other respects of such shallow Intellectual-

Intellectuals, and such mean Qualifications, that no wise man would take their Advice in any thing of ordinary concern, and therefore 'tis very unlikely God should make choice of such persons to be his Messengers and the Conveyers of his Will to men. But if they would likewise consider how unlike the Prophets of the Old Testament were to these Pretenders, both as to their *Intellectuals*, and their *Morals*, 'twould go a great way to discover how vastly different they are from each other, and the Truth and excellency of the one would more evidently appear by comparing it with the Evident marks of Imposture and Meanness, which are found in the other.

As to the *Intellectual Accomplishments* of the true Prophets, they had usually an Ingenuous and liberal Education, as appears by the Institution of the *Schools of the Prophets*, so often mention'd in the History of the *Kings*. And we find 'twas reckon'd a wonder that *Saul* should be among the *Prophets*<sup>a</sup>, because he had not been Educated suitably to that Profession. So God's calling *Amos* to this Office from being a *Herdsmen*, was extraordinary and unusual, as he himself intimates<sup>b</sup>. And indeed the style of the

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam.  
10, 11.  
19, 24.

<sup>b</sup> Amos  
8, 14.



The Prophets plainly discovers them  
 to have been Men of a good Edu-  
 cation, and therefore the Criticks  
 have all observed what great dif-  
 ference there is between *Amos's* style  
 and that of the other Prophets, which  
 they justly impute to their different  
 Education. *Isaiah's* style is Elegant <sup>c</sup> *Isaia di-*  
 and lofty: *Jeremy's* shews him to have <sup>e</sup> *Etio purif-*  
 been a great Master of Rhetorick: <sup>d</sup> *E-* omnes qui  
*Ezekiel* plainly discovers in his way of <sup>f</sup> *post Mo-*  
 writing great skill in Architecture and <sup>sen scrip-</sup>  
 Geography: *Daniel's* Wisdom was so <sup>serunt, &</sup>  
 famous even when he was young, <sup>ejus & vocat</sup>  
 that it became a Proverb among the <sup>pulcher-</sup>  
*Chaldeans* to say, *Art thou wiser than* <sup>Gror. in</sup>  
*Daniel*? And not to descend to any <sup>Il. 50. 4.</sup>  
 more particulars, we find that all <sup>d</sup> *Mirus*  
 their writings are full of Powerful <sup>in affecti-</sup>  
 Exhortations to Vertue, of weighty and <sup>bus conci-</sup>  
 Pathetick Representations of the hei- <sup>randis</sup>  
 nousness of those Vices which were <sup>Jeremias.</sup>  
 then prevailing, and the miseries which <sup>Idem.</sup>  
 would attend them. We find they <sup>e</sup> *Ezek.*  
 set forth the absurdity of Pagan Ido- <sup>28. 3.</sup>  
 latriy with great strength and smart- <sup>f</sup> *Il. 40.*  
 nesses of Argument: and endeavour <sup>18, &c.</sup>  
 to give men clear and distinct No- <sup>44. 9, &c.</sup>  
 tions of Gods Spirituality, Unity <sup>Il. 40.</sup>  
 Omnipresence, Universal Provi- <sup>12. &c.</sup>  
 dence, (of which the foretelling how <sup>b</sup> *Jer. 10.*  
 free Agents will determine them- <sup>11. 12.</sup>  
 selves, is a signal instance) and Justice <sup>Il. 44. 6.</sup>  
 in <sup>i</sup> *Jer. 23.*  
<sup>23, 24.</sup>  
 in <sup>Il. 66. 1.</sup>

in rewarding Men according to their  
 works<sup>k</sup>. They unfold the methods of  
 Providence in disposing of Kingdoms<sup>l</sup>  
 and making use of wicked Princes  
 and Nations to be the Instruments  
 of God's Justice in punishing the  
 sins of others<sup>m</sup>. Such discourses don't  
 look like the dreams of a Melancholy and disturbed fancy, but  
 do indeed answer the Character they  
 pretend to. And those Men who  
 will not believe them to be of Divine  
 Original, ought in reason to allow  
 them to be the Product of a settled  
 Judgment: and can't in Justice  
 but grant, that if the Prophets did  
 not foresee what was to come by  
 a Prophetical Spirit yet they made  
 very Probable Conjectures by a Natural  
 Sagacity; since the Event has  
 so plainly justified a great part of  
 their Predictions. And if they will  
 not be perswaded that God enlightened  
 the minds of the Prophets by  
 an extraordinary Revelation yet they  
 can't in Justice deny, but that their  
 discourse of the Nature of God and  
 of his providence, and of the Obedience  
 which he requires, with as great a  
 degree of clearness and certainty,  
 as Men's Natural faculties can arrive  
 to. And therefore 'tis not without  
 reason that *Origen* does often in

his Books against *Celsus* <sup>n</sup> insist upon <sup>n</sup> P. 100.  
 this, That *Moses* and the Prophets in-<sup>-177.</sup>  
 structed Men in the nature of God and<sup>-260.</sup>  
 of their duty, much better than the ac-<sup>-359:</sup>  
 curtest Philosophers among the Heathens. Ed. Cant.

So malicious and groundless is that  
 pretence of *Spinoza*, where he tells  
 us<sup>o</sup>, that the Prophets did not agree <sup>o Theol:</sup>  
 in their Notions about the Nature <sup>Polit. c. 1.</sup>  
 of God, because forsooth, different <sup>p. m. 21.</sup>  
 Prophets saw different Signs of the  
 Divine presence. As if they could  
 not distinguish between a *Symbol* of  
 God's Presence, and the Divine Na-  
 ture it self. And he may as well  
 say, that *Moses* took the *Cloudy Pil-*  
*lar* to be God himself: and by the  
 same reason he must conclude, that  
*Moses* thought the *Cberubims* and the  
*Cloud* upon the *Mercy-seat*, which he  
 himself order'd to be made, to be  
 God, or at least to resemble his Es-  
 sence, and then I think he would  
 have been guilty of greater Idolatry  
 than *Aaron* was in making the *Golden*  
*Calf*.

2. If we consider the *Moral Indow-*  
*ments* of the Prophets, we shall find  
 their Vertues so extraordinary, that  
 none of the Whifling Pretenders to  
 Prophecy, can in the least compare  
 with them. With what undaunted  
 Courage and Constancy did they re-  
 prove

prove the popular Vices of the times they lived in? Not sparing the Greatest Persons either out of fear or flattery. And if we suppose them to have acted like Men in their Wits, (and there is no tolerable reason to suspect the contrary,) we must conclude that nothing but a Sense of their Duty, could prompt them to do this: for they could propose no advantage to themselves by it, but on the contrary were to expect all the scorn and misery which the Angry and Revengful Temper of wicked Men in Power whom they had offended, could bring upon them. And it could certainly be no pleasure to be continually reproving Men, when there was little or no hopes of reclaiming them: nay when they had not so much Civility as to thank them for their good Intentions, and take the good Advice which they offer'd, kindly at their hands. If it had not been purely out of a principle of Conscience, and that they were *perswaded* of the truth and great Concern of these things, and *therefore spoke*, they might with much more advantage to themselves, have let Men be quiet and go on securely in their sins. They themselves were sensible, that they undertook a very Difficult Employment, and must expect to meet with

a great deal of hard Usage if they would faithfully discharge it: which made them so far from being ambitious of it, that they would gladly have been excused from accepting it and afterward would fain have quitted it. Many of their Troubles and Sufferings we find Recorded in their own Books\*, but several other Scripture-Writers assure us, that they were generally Martyrs for the truth's sake, and yet none of these Sufferings could prevail with them to retract any thing they had said, or to confess that they had been deluded themselves, or impos'd upon others, and said, *The Lord saith*, tho he had not spoken. Origen hath an excellent passage to our present purpose, which I shall here set down at length. He was speaking just before concerning the Heathen Prophets and Priests, that utter'd the Oracles, and then he adds these remarkable words: Τῶν ὅ ἐν Ἰουδαίῳ Προφητῶν οἱ μὲν ἡ ἀπὸ περὶ φητείας καὶ θείας κατακαχῆς, ὡς ἂν σφοδροί οἱ δ' ἀπ' αὐτῆς τῆ περὶ φητείας φωτιζόμενοι καὶ νῦν τοιοῦτοι γερῶνασιν, αἰρεθέντες ἀπὸ τῆ προνοίας εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι τὸ θεῖον πνεῦμα καὶ τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν προφητῶν λόγους, διὰ τὸ τῷ βίῳ δυσμίμητον καὶ σφόδρα εὐτονον καὶ ἐλευθέρῳ, καὶ πάν-  
 H  
 ti potatum.

p Jer. 1.6.

-17. 16.

Jon. 1. 3.

q Jer. 15.

p 10.-20.9.

r Jer. 15.

10. Ec.

-c. 18. 18.

-20. 1. Ec.

-26. 8. Ec.

-36. 26.

-37. 15.

-38. 6.

Dan. 6. A.

mos 7. 10.

/ Matt.

5. 12. -23.

37. Acts

7. 52.

Heb. 11.

36, 37, 38.

v. etiam.

1 Kings

19. 10.

Nehem.

9. 26.

c. Cel.

sum l. 7.

p. 336.

Ed. Cant.

u deest

vox. f.

legend.

hizōthosar

προφητείας

ἀπὸ x le-

quentibus

hic inter-

ti potatum.

τη πρὸς θάνατον καὶ κινδύνου ἀκατά-  
 πληκτον· τοιοῦτοι γὰρ καὶ ὁ λόγος αἰρεῖ  
 δεῖν εἶναι τὲς τῷ ὅπῃ πᾶσι θεῷ Προ-  
 φῆται, οἵτινες παίγνιον ἀπέφηναν τῷ  
 Ἀρτιάδην καὶ Κρατίτῳ καὶ Διογένη  
 εὐτονίαν δι' ἀλήθειαν γὰρ καὶ ἐλευθε-  
 ρίως ἐλέγχειν τὲς ἀμαρτανόνας ἐπι-  
 δάδουσιν, ἐπεκρίθησαν &c. ex Hebr. 11.

37, 38. αἱ ἐνὸρῶντες τῷ θεῷ καὶ τοῖς  
 ἀοράτοις τῷ θεῷ, καὶ μὴ βλεπομένοις  
 αἰδιότης καὶ διὰ τῷτο ὅτι αἰωνίοις.

"But as for the Jewish Prophets, some  
 of them were honour'd with Divine In-  
 spiration, as being eminent for Wisdom  
 before, and some of them having their  
 minds inlightened by the very Gift of Pro-  
 phecy became Wise, being made choice of  
 by Providence, as persons fit to be intrust-  
 ed with the Divine Spirit and the Dictates  
 of it, by reason of the Inimitable perfecti-  
 ons of their Lives, their Boldness, Im-  
 partiality, and Courage that could not  
 be daunted by Death or Danger. For  
 reason tells us, that 'twas fit the Prophets  
 of God should be such Men; for Courage  
 and Constancy of mind, that if we should  
 compare the Fortitude of Antisthenes,  
 Crates or Diogenes with theirs, this  
 would look but like Childrens-play to that:  
 And therefore because they spoke truth, and  
 rebuked Sinners with a great deal of free-  
 dom; " \* they were ston'd, fawn  
 " asun-

x Heb.  
 1.37,38.



" asunder, were tempted, were slain  
 " with the Sword, they wander'd a-  
 " bout in sheep-skins and goat-skins,  
 " being destitute, afflicted, tormented:  
 " they wander'd in deserts, in moun-  
 " tains, in dens and caves of the earth,  
 " of whom the world was not worthy:  
*Having their minds always fixed upon  
 God, and upon the invisible things which  
 are with him, which cannot be discerned  
 by Sense and therefore are Eternal.*

A little after, the same Author has  
 these words to the same purpose,  
 Διόπερ ἐν ὑδενὶ τιθέμεθα λόγῳ τοῦ  
 ὑπο τῆς Πυθίας ἢ ὑπο μυσθίων ἄλλων  
 λεγομένων δοκροπῶν εἰρημένα· τὰ δ'  
 ὑπο τῆς ἐν Ἰερσάα προφητευσάντων τε-  
 δήπαμεν, ὁρῶντες ὅτι ἄξιόν ἦν αὐτῶν  
 ὁ ἑρρωμένον καὶ εὐτονόν καὶ σμνός βίος  
 πνεύματι Θεοῦ τρόπῳ προφητεύσαν-  
 τόν καμῶν, καὶ ὑδὲν ἔχοντι ὡδὲ πλῆσιον  
 ταῖς ἀπὸ δαιμόνων μαρτυρίαις. *We, saith  
 he, do not value the Pythian or any other  
 of the fam'd Heathen Oracles, yet we  
 reverence the Prophets that were amongst  
 the Jews, because we see that the unshak-  
 en Courage and Constancy of their Lives,  
 made them worthy to receive the Spirit  
 of God that prophesied quite another way,  
 and had nothing in it like the Oracles  
 which the Devils utter'd.*

From what has been said we may conclude, That if we consider the Prophets with relation to their *personal Qualifications* only, they will appear to be persons of unquestionable Credit, since their Intellectual Accomplishments were such, that they could not probably be deceived themselves, and the Integrity of their Lives was so great, that we cannot suppose they had any Design to impose upon others. I proceed in the

II. Place to consider the chief Aim and Design of God's sending Prophets to the Jews and what was the Principal End of their Office.

I confess I am apt to believe that the occasion of God's promising to send a succession of Prophets to the Jews, (as many Learned men understand that place <sup>w</sup> of *Deuteronomy*) was, That they might have no Temptation to have recourse to the Heathen Oracles and Soothsayers, to know what should come to pass, for want of Prophets of their own. Thus much the words of *Moses* seem to imply, <sup>x</sup> *There shall not be any among you that useth Divination, or an Observer of times, or an Enchanter ; --for these nations whom thou shalt possess bearkened to Observers of times and to Diviners, but as for thee the Lord thy God hath not suffer'd thee so*

<sup>w</sup> Deut.  
18. 15.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid. d  
<sup>v</sup>. 10. ad  
<sup>v</sup>. 15.

to do. The Lord thy God shall raise thee up a Prophet of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken. The promise of a Prophet, which tho it eminently relate to the *Messias*, yet the Context shews it was primarily and immediately meant of an order of Prophets that should succeed *Moses*: this promise I say, was given to the Jews, as appears from this place, to prevent their applying themselves to the Heathen pretenders to Prophecy. This is *Origen's* Observation upon this place<sup>y</sup>, and he adds this <sup>L. I. c.</sup> judicious remark. Therefore, saith he, <sup>Celsus.</sup> when the Nations round about the Jews <sup>p. 28. Ed.</sup> had their Oracles and several ways of Divination, all which were strictly prohibited among the Jews, if they had not had the satisfaction of foreknowing things to come some way or other, it had been almost impossible, considering the great Curiosity of humane nature, to have kept them from despising the Law of *Moses*, as having no mark of Divinity upon it, or rejecting the Prophets who succeeded him, and taking no care to preserve their Discourses; or else apostatizing to the Heathen Oracles, or setting up something like them among themselves. Therefore 'tis no wonder that the Prophets now and then gave answers to those that enquir'd of them about ordinary Accidents, as *Samuel* told<sup>z</sup> *Saul* <sup>1 Sam. 10. 2.</sup>

H 3

that

that his asses were found, *and* Ahijah the Prophet <sup>a</sup> foretold the death of Jereboam's son. Or else how could they that stood up for the Law of Moses reprove them that went to consult Idols, as we find Elias <sup>b</sup> reprov'd Ahaziah, saying, Is it because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the God of Ekron? Thus far that excellent Writer. Which words of his give us a very good account of the original Institution of Prophets among the Jews, and likewise furnish us with a very satisfactory Reason, why the Prophets condescended now and then to satisfy peoples demands about private and trivial Concerns, which seem to be below the Dignity of God's Prophets to meddle with: altho I don't question, but God had some further design in Instituting a Succession of Prophets, and charging the people to have a regard to what they should deliver, than meerly to satisfy the Jews Curiosity, or prevent their seeking to Idols for the Knowledge of Futurities. And I suppose that the Institution of Prophets was design'd chiefly for these Three ends.

1. To admonish the people of their Duty, and press them to practise it, by proposing God's Mercies and Judgments, according as they have behaved themselves.

2. To

2. To keep up a Sense of God's Providence in their minds.

3. To foretell the times of the Messiah, and prepare Men's minds for the Reception of Him.

1. The first part of the Prophetical Office was to admonish the people of their Duty, and perswade them to practise it, by setting before them God's Mercies or Judgments, which they would suddenly feel, according as they behaved themselves.

The Prophets were principally intended to be Preachers of Righteousness, and generally speaking, foretold future events only in order to make their Exhortations successful. And with respect to this part of the Prophetical Office, we find the words *Prophet* and *Prophecy* used in the New Testament for instructing Men in their Duty<sup>c</sup>. Without question 'twas properly the Priests business to instruct the people in their Duty, and they were to seek the Law at their mouths<sup>d</sup>: but the refractory temper of the Jews, made them despise the ordinary Methods of Reproof and Correction, and their dulness withal made it necessary for God to awaken them out of their sins, sometimes by an Extraordinary Call from Heaven: by sending persons upon a particular Message to them, and giving Testimony to their

<sup>c</sup> Acts

15. 31.

Rom. 12.

1 Cor. 6.

14. 1, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Malac.

2. 7.

Divine Mission by some Sign or Wonder: (which I suppose was generally the *Kertheion* or Trial of a true Prophet, of which more hereafter) and all this to reinforce the Promises and Threatnings contain'd in the Law of *Moses*, and assure the Jews he would be as good as his word, and they should quickly find, that as if they would amend their ways, *there should not fail one word of all his good Promises*, so if they persisted in their ill courses, *all the Evils that were written in the Law of Moses, should suddenly come upon them and overtake them*. And in this respect, the Prophecies of the Old Testament differ very much from all the False Pretences to Prophecy, that in the Former, future Events are not foretold meerly to please Men's Curiosity, but only in order to the making them better; whereas the Latter do not make it any part of their concern to awaken Men to a sense of God's Over-ruling Providence and Justice, or of the ill Consequences that attend Vice when it grows Predominant: and have no other design but meerly to gratifie that Itching desire Men have to be prying into the secrets of Futurity: which is a piece of Knowledge that of it self will do Men more harm than good, and



and which God upon that account Conceals for the most part from Men, or if he Reveals it, yet he does it by dark and Imperfect Hints on purpose: the reasons of which we shall discourse of more at large in the next Chapter. Now as God made the promoting of Vertue and Holiness the principal design of his sending the Prophets, with respect to those particular persons to whom he sent them: so we find accordingly, that they bestowed their pains and labour chiefly upon this Subject, to perswade Men to *break off their sins by Repentance, and to cease to do evil and learn to do well.* Witness those Pathetick Dissuasives from Sin, and Exhortations to Vertue, which make up far the greater part of their Writings: in which they discover such a Spirit of Piety and Holiness, as is far above the Rudiments of the Law, and approaches very near to the perfection of the Gospel. But of this more by and by.

2. *The second design of God's Instituting the Prophetical Office, was to keep up a sense of God's Providence in Men's minds.*

The Jews were none of the Acutest or best Temper'd people in the World, and perhaps the greatest Wisdom and Integrity would have been little

little enough to make them keep firm to the belief of the True God, the sole Creator and Governour of all things, when the whole World beside was given up to Idolatry. For as strong and prevalent as Truth is, yet 'tis in danger of being overpower'd by Multitude; nay Singularity makes Truth it self look Suspicious, and Men are apt to think 'tis more likely a Few should be mistaken than a great Many. Upon this account 'twas necessary, that God should sometimes Reinforce the Doctrine of his Universal Providence and Government upon the minds of the Jews, by an Extraordinary Method: and by laying open the secrets of his Providence, and shewing them first what should befall themselves, if they did not repent, and then their Neighbours; convince them that he was the Supreme Lord and Governour of the World, and the Kingdoms of it were at his disposal. 'Tis further to be consider'd, that when the Jews saw how much greater and more flourishing the Neighbouring Kingdoms of *Assyria* and *Egypt* were, than their own, this was a likely Argument to make an Impression upon them, that judg'd of God's *Love or Hatred by what they saw before them*; this might make them

them imagine, that some other Being had a great share in managing Affairs below beside their God; and tempt them to conclude, that since the God whom they Worshipped was not so kind to his servants, as the Heathen Gods were to their Votaries, either he was not so able, or not so willing to reward his Worshippers, as the Deities of their Neighbouring Countries were. And 'tis probable that in the Latter times of the Jewish Kingdom, when their Enemies made frequent Incurfions into their Country, and threatned intirely to subdue it, and at length did so, 'twas a temptation to many of the Jews to forsake the True God, and turn to Idols, because they saw 'twas better with their Worshippers than with those of the True God. For these reasons 'twas fit that God should often give this Dull and Unthinking people fresh Assurances that all things were at his disposal, that 'twas in his power to make them Happy or Miserable, and that they must expect to be one or t'other, according as they observ'd or neglected his commands. And tho it might be sufficient for this design, to have given them the Predictions of such things only as were

See Jer.  
44. 17, 18.

to

to come to pass in their own times ; yet God was pleas'd to discover to his Prophets what should come to pass in the *Latter days* : both to honour them with the prospect of that glorious Scene of things, which he had reserv'd till the *Fulness of time* should come, and give them a foretaste of the Joys they were to expect in the *Messias's* Heavenly Kingdom, by discovering to them some part of the Happiness of his Earthly one : and likewise to give a convincing Proof to all Ages, that he was the *First and the last*, the sole Orderer and Disposer of all things, that when the things themselves should come to pass, men might say, *This hath God done, and might perceive that 'tis his work.* And this leads me to consider.

3. *The third thing which God intended in the Institution of the Prophetical Office, which was to foretell the times of the Messias, and to prepare men's minds for the Reception of him.*

And indeed to give men notice of these things, was God's principal design in sending the Prophets, and the coming of the *Messias* was what God spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets ever since the world began. And since God seems to have made this the principal part of the Prophetical Office, I shall

shall consider it as carefully as I can,  
and shall inquire,

1. First, For what Reasons God thought  
to reveal this so often and so particu-  
larly.

2. I shall consider the manner how the  
Prophets delivered this Prophecy.

1. As to the first, we may assign  
two reasons why God reveal'd this  
so often and so particularly.

1. To shew that this was the Master-  
piece of his Providence, if I may so speak,  
what he had an eye upon in all his parti-  
cular dispensations toward the Jews, and  
what he design'd as the ultimate End and  
Completion of them all.

2. To wean the Jews by degrees from  
the Carnal Institutions of the Law, and  
by discovering to them a Better State than  
that they were under, to raise their minds  
to Spiritual and Heavenly things, and  
thereby prepare them for the reception of  
the Messias.

1. As for the first of these Reasons;  
it seems as if God design'd to raise  
mens Expectations, and make them  
look upon this as the great Master-  
piece of his Power and Wisdom,  
when he made the coming of the Mes-  
sias the common Theme of all the  
Prophets, *Mytically* impli'd it in all the  
Promises, and *Typically* represented it  
not only in the Ceremonies of the  
Law,

Law, but also in the Lives and Actions of the Eminent Persons among the Jews in all Ages. What God himself lays so much Stress upon, men ought to regard as something more than an ordinary work of Providence: and surely the Prophets had Great and Noble Ideas of it, since they seem to Vye with each other, who shall excel the rest in setting forth its Glories to the best Advantage, and by the most Emphatical and Lively Representations, with respect to the Capacity of the People to whom they were to publish those glad Tidings. If the *Messias* had come into the World without any Notice given of it before hand, the Unexpectedness of it would indeed have caus'd Surprise and Wonder; but it would not have been look'd upon as an effect of the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of God, and of that *Προνοία* *f* Eph. 3. *Σοφία* <sup>f</sup> which foreordain'd this before  
 10. the Foundation of the world, and made  
 v. Grot. in all the lesser Dispensations of Provi-  
 locum. dence subservient to this great End, and by Various methods and Different measures pursu'd one and the same Design.

2. The second Reason I assign why the coming of the *Messias* did bear so great a part in the Prophe-



cal Predictions, was to wean the Jews by degrees from the Legal Ceremonies and Institutions : and by discovering to them a Better Covenant than that they were under, to raise their Minds to Spiritual and Heavenly things, and thereby prepare them for the Reception of the Messias.

I look upon it as very probable, that God instituted a great part of the Ceremonial Law with respect to the Opinions that were generally receiv'd at the time when it was enacted, and in compliance with the Rites that the Nations of the World used in the Worship of their Gods : that so by *g v. Mai-  
monid.  
More  
Nevoch.  
Par. 3.  
c. 32.  
p. 432.* this Condescension, he might check that hankering after the Religious Rites of the Nations round about them, which the Jews upon all occasions discover'd to be in their Temper. 'Tis upon this account, that St. Paul calls the Ceremonial Law the *Elements of the world<sup>h</sup>*, and *weak and beggarly Elements<sup>i</sup>*. But 'tis true withal, that God in his Wisdom so contrived it, that these Rudiments which were taken from the Rites and Usages of the Heathen world, were to the Jews the Rudiments or first Beginnings of Christianity, according to what the same Apostle says, that *the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ<sup>k</sup>*. It *Gal. 3.  
1b. v. 9.* was indeed like the first Rudiments<sup>24</sup> of

of Learning, which young Beginners at first do not know the use of, but when they are gone on a pretty way, then they find those Beginnings made the way easier for that which comes after. And in like manner, tho the Jews understood not at first God's Design in prescribing so many several kinds of Expiation for sin, yet when the *way to the Holiest by the Blood of Christ* was laid open, then they might easily discover, that all those different Rites were design'd to represent that one Sacrifice of the *Lamb of God* which was offer'd for the Sins of the World. And as God thus complied with the Ignorance of the Jews in that state of Non-age, and fed them like Children, *with milk and not with meat*, with such Instructions as were suitable to their Capacities: so he reveal'd this Great and Ultimate End of the Law, by gentle and easie degrees, as they were able to bear it. He first discovered it faintly under the shadows of the Law, which seem'd by their own Weakness and Imperfection to aim at something more perfect than themselves. But then by the Prophets God manifested this grand Intention of his more clearly: by them he gave large and distinct Predictions of a New and better State  
of

of things to come, of a *New Covenant*,  
*establish'd upon Better Promises*, and  
 consisting of more Excellent Pre-  
 cepts: that God's Kingdom should  
 be enlarg'd, and all Nations should  
 flow unto it: that he would take Priests  
 and Levites out of other Nations, and  
 in every place Incense should be offer'd  
 to him and a pure Offering. And in or-  
 der to prepare men's minds for this  
 New State, the Prophets often speak  
 after a slighting manner of the Levi-  
 tical Rites and Ceremonies, and  
 press men to the Practice of the  
 Weightier matters of the Law, *Judg-*  
*ment, Mercy and the Love of God*: and  
 require inward Purity of heart, in-  
 stead of outward Ceremonial Wor-  
 ship. Which is such a pitch of Per-  
 fection in obedience, as *Moses's Law*  
 seldom recommends: for indeed that  
 was chiefly design'd to be a Political  
 Law, instituted for the Government  
 of the Jewish Common-wealth, and  
 therefore as all Political Laws are,  
 'tis more careful to restrain Men from  
 the *Overt-Acts* of Sin, than to make  
 them sincerely and Inwardly Good.  
 In which respect *St. Paul* says *that*  
*the Law was not made for a Rule to*  
*the Righteous*, but for a Restraint to  
 the *Lawless and Disobedient*. And  
 therefore the Prophets by refining up-

Jer. 31.

31.

m. II. 2. 2.

n. 66. 21.

o. Mal. 1:

11.

11. 107.

11. 107.

11. 107.

11. 107.

p. II. 1. 11.

p. II. 1. 11.

p. II. 1. 11.

Jer. 7. 22,

23.

Hos. 6, 6.

Amos 5.

21.-24.

Micah 6.

6, 7, 8.

7 Ezek.

18. 31.

18. 31.

18. 31.

18. 31.

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18. 31.

18. 31.

18. 31.

18. 31.

18. 31.

18. 31.

*f* Prophetæ  
omnes E-  
gregiis ad  
Evangelii-  
um Duces.  
Grot. in  
Jer. 7. 9.

*2* Macc.  
7.

on the Law, and exhorting Men to fulfil the Righteousness of the Law, by walking not after the Flesh but after the Spirit, did contribute very much toward the preparing Men's minds for the times of the Messias, as they wean'd them from the overfondness they had to the Levitical Rites, by shewing them a more excellent way to please God: and as they gave them to understand, that God did not design the Mosaical Covenant to be Perpetual, but that it should at last give way to a Better. And these discourses which the Prophets made to the Jews, together with the several Afflictions God brought upon them, both in the Captivity and afterward, on purpose to take off their minds from the Temporal Promises, and make them look up to Spiritual and Heavenly Ones, had so great an effect upon the generality of that People, that in the latter times we find their Writers discourse of the Nature of Religion in a style much more agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel, than they used formerly, as appears by the *Book of Ecclesiasticus*: and speak of a Future State with great Clearness and Assurance, as may be seen in the Dying Speeches of the *Maccabees*, and in several other parts of the *Apo-cryphal*

*cryptal* Writings<sup>u</sup>. And all this con-tributed very much to raise in the minds of the Jews that Expectation of the *Messias*, which we find the generality of them had at the time of our Saviour's Coming<sup>w</sup>. I proceed to consider

<sup>u</sup> Wild. 37

<sup>&c.</sup> 5.

Tob. 3. 6.

<sup>w</sup> John

1. 20, 21.

7. 40, 41.

Luke 2.

38. - 3. 15.

2. *The manner how the Propheets deliver'd this Prophecy, and that was Twofold,*

1. *There were some Prophecies which in the Proper, Litteral and Primary meaning related to Christ, and can't in any Tolerable Sense be applied to any other.*

2. *Others, tho in their Literal and Direct sense, they foretold some other Event which was nearer at hand, yet had a further and Mystical sense contain'd in them, which related to Christ and his Kingdom.*

i. Concerning the First sort, I need not say much, for they are but few in Comparison with those of the Second, but are withal so plain, that all the Art of the Adversaries of Christianity has not been able to avoid the force of them, or wrest them to any other sense, but what the Christians give of them. *Origen* is very copious upon this Subject<sup>x</sup>, and proves at large that several Texts of Scripture, never was fulfill'd in any person but our Saviour. The Instances he gives are Gen. 49. 10. *Mich.* 5. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Contr.

Cels. l. 1.

p. 39,

<sup>&c.</sup>

*Isaiah c. 52. and 52. Psalm 45. To which we may add, Dan. 9. 24, &c. Psalm 110. Psalm 22. 16, 18. -- 69. 21. The greatest difficulties concern the Second sort of Prophecies, which have a double sense, Literal and Mystical, for the Explaining of which I shall lay down these following Observations.*

*1. That most of the Prophecies concerning Christ have a double sense, Literal and Mystical.*

*2. That those Prophecies concerning Christ, which do Directly point at something which happen'd before the time of our Saviour, yet have some evident Marks in them, which shew that they have some Further meaning than that which was first intended.*

*3. That there are several very good Reasons upon which this Opinion of a Double sense in the Prophets, Literal and Mystical is grounded.*

*1. The First Observation I lay down is, That most of the Prophecies concerning Christ, have a Double sense, Literal and Mystical.*

Now to avoid all Cavilling about words, I shall first premise that by the Literal sense, I mean that which the Prophet more immediately intended, and which pointed at some Event that was nearer the Prophets own time, than the Mystical Completion was ;



was: and by the Mystical sense I understand that which had a respect to the times of the Gospel, tho sometimes this Latter sense is more properly express'd by the words, and more agreeable to their Natural Import than the former, as we shall see presently. Having premised this, I proceed to shew that *there is a Literal as well as a Mystical sense in most of the Prophecies relating to Christ.*

Without allowing this we shall make great Confusion and Disorder in the Prophetical Writings, if we suppose them to break off Abruptly from the matter in hand, and without any visible Transition go to a quite different Subject. And this is, to speak more particularly, very unreasonable to suppose in the Prophet *Isaiah*, who as he is most eminent for the clearness of his Prophecies concerning the Messias, so he is as remarkable for the Regular Order and Contexture of his Prophecies, and their Coherence one with another. And the Historical Relations which he intersperses in his Writings, serve <sup>Chap. 7.</sup> as a Key to open the Primary and <sup>c. 36-37.</sup> Literal Intention of his whole Prophecy. <sup>-39.</sup> But the Beauty of it taken all together, will be quite spoil'd, except we suppose him in most Cases to have

some regard to the Subject he is upon, and rather to take Hints from thence to discourse concerning the state of the Gospel, than to fly out into a Foreign Subject without any Respect to Order or Coherence. The wonderful Restauration of the Jewish Nation and Deliverance out of their Captivity, gave a very fit occasion to the Prophet to foretell at the same time, that Great Salvation which Christ the Redeemer of *Israel* should Accomplish, and was a proper Representation of our Saviour's giving *Light to the Gentiles who sat in darkness, and* <sup>a</sup> *proclaiming liberty to the Captives of Sin and Satan.* And accordingly the Prophet pursues this with a pompous Eloquence from the 40th Chapter, almost to the end of his Prophecy. But yet there's no reason to think, that he was so intent upon this Latter Subject, as quite to forget the Former: for he was not only an Evangelical Prophet, but likewise knew how to *speake a word in season to him that was weary* <sup>a</sup> under oppression and exile, and *preach deliverance to the Captives of Israel.* But I shall give a more evident Instance of this, in that Famous Prophecy of his, <sup>b</sup> *Behold a Virgin shall conceive, &c.* It appears by the beginning of the Chapter, that

<sup>a</sup> *Isaiah*  
61. 1.

<sup>a</sup> *Isaiah*  
50. 4.

<sup>b</sup> *Isaiah*  
7. 14.

that the occasion of this Prophecy was *Abaz's* fear of the Kings of *Syria* and *Israel*, and his distrust of God's delivering him out of that distress. Upon which the Prophet gives the King his choice of *asking any sign of God* <sup>c c</sup> *Ibid* as a pledge of his Deliverance: and <sup>ver. 11.</sup> upon his refusing to name any, which he did rather out of Despair <sup>d</sup> than a <sup>d</sup> *ver. 13.* modest Unwillingness to prescribe to God; the Prophet by God's order gives him this Sign, *A virgin shall conceive, &c.* Now 'tis plain both by the Occasion and the Intent of God's giving this sign, that the words must in their primary and Immediate sense, relate to something which should come to pass very Shortly, or else how could it be an assurance to *Abaz* of a speedy Deliverance? For I pray, what sense would there be in such words as these, "I assure you of a speedy Deliverance, by the same Token that above 700. years hence the Messias shall be born of a Virgin? The use of a Sign is to go before the thing signified, not to come after it, at least not to keep such a distance behind it. Whereas if we suppose the First intended sense of this Prophecy to be this, "that before one who is now a Virgin can bear a Son, and that child come to some

“degrees of Understanding, and know  
 “how to refuse the evil and choose the  
 good”, God will deliver *Abaz*: the  
 intent and meaning of the Prophecy  
 perfectly answers the occasion of it,  
 and exactly agrees with the scope of  
 the Context from the 16<sup>th</sup> verse of  
 this, to the latter end of the next Chap-  
 ter. This Prophecy I thought fit to  
 treat of at large, because it makes  
 out the Double sense of Prophecies  
 which I contend for so clearly: for  
 there are as evident Marks of its be-  
 ing intended further than its Prima-  
 ry sense and design, as there are of  
 the Primary sense it self, as I shall  
 shew by and by, for further Satisfac-  
 tion about the Sense of this Prophe-  
 cy, see the Bishop of *Barb* and *Well's*  
*Demonstration of the Messias*, Part 2. ch. 5.

I shall only just mention two or  
 three Prophecies more, which plainly  
 and at first sight, imply a Literal sense,  
 distinct from the Mystical. The first  
 shall be that of *Hosea*, “Out of Egypt  
 have I call'd my Son”, which was cer-  
 tainly first meant of God's delivering  
 the *Israelites* out of the Egyptian “Bon-  
 dage”. Another instance is that of  
*Jeremy*, “In *Ramah* was there a voice  
 heard, *Rachel* weeping for her children,  
 &c. which without question was first  
 spoken of the Captivity of *Benjamin*

f *Hos.* 11.  
 i.

g See

*Exod.* 4.

22, 23.

b *Jer.* 31.

15.

by

by *Nebuchadnezzar*. The last I shall mention is that of the Psalmist, *He that eats of my bread hath magnified himself against me*, which was originally spoken by *David* concerning some of his own servants, who combin'd against him in *Absalom's* Conspiracy. Many others of the same nature might be alledg'd <sup>k. 2 Sam. 7. 14. Psal. 41. 9.</sup>

2. My second Observation is, *That the Prophecies which have a Litteral sense beside the Mystical, yet have evident Marks that something further is design'd by them than what is contain'd in the Litteral sense.* <sup>Psal. 72. 109.</sup>

Tho we allow that many of those Prophecies which the Writers of the New Testament quote as irrefragable Proofs of Christianity, pointed Directly and Immediately at some thing that came to pass before; yet if we examine them thoroughly, we shall find that generally speaking, the Primary and Litteral sense does not come up to the full Force and Import of the Words, but that they imply much more than can be true of the things or persons which were first intended: From whence we may conclude that they have a Regard to something further, in which they are properly Verified and Fulfill'd. As to instance in the Prophecy before mention'd, *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son*: Who does not see that

that the first Sense and Completion, viz. *One that is now a Virgin shall marry and bear a Son*, comes infinitely short of the full Force and true Meaning of the words? And therefore they certainly look further than their first intended Sense. So there are several Prophecies in which some of the most Remarkable Passages were never fulfill'd in the Persons of those concerning whom they were first spoken: As

- 1 Psal. 22. those Passages in David's Psalms, 18, 19. <sup>1</sup> *They pierced my hands and my feet, they parted my garments, and cast lots upon my vesture.* <sup>2</sup> *They gave me gall to eat, and vinegar to drink,* were never, that we can find, literally true of David, tho 'tis likely Both those Psalms were at first pen'd by him with regard to his own Circumstances. In short, let any man compare the Literal Sense of the Prophecies relating to Christ, as 'tis Explain'd by Grotius, ( who has took more pains to Clear this Matter than any other Expositor ) with the Mystical, and he will find that generally speaking, the Primary or Literal Sense does not come up to the full Import and Meaning of the Words: but looks Narrow and Forc'd in many places, in comparison of the Mystical. From whence 'twill appear that the
- Pro-



Prophecies which are applied the by Apostles to Christ and the Gospel, are not wrested from their Natural Sense, nor applied only by way of *Accommodation*, ( as some men love to <sup>n Fr. p. 227.</sup> speak, and Mr. N. <sup>Eng. p. 22, 23.</sup> seems to be of the same mind ) just as men apply the Sentences of an Author to quite different purposes from what he at first intended by it, and as *Homer's* and *Virgil's* Verses have been made use of to express such things as never came into their thoughts.

3. The Third Observation I lay down is, *That there are several good Reasons upon which this Opinion of a Literal and Mystical Sense in Prophecies is grounded.*

1. To suppose a Double Sense in the Prophetical Writings, is to suppose them writ in a style agreeable to that of the Law, and suitable to the Rude and Carnal apprehensions of Religion which prevailed among the Jews. They always look upon the Law as containing something Mysterious and Divine, under the Obvious and common Sense of it. This the Psalmist acknowledg'd, when o Psal. he pray'd that God would Open his 119. 18. eyes, that he might behold wondrous things <sup>p Hebr. 8.</sup> out of his Law: and St. Paul when he <sup>5.</sup> calls the Rites and Ceremonies of <sup>9. 23, 24.</sup> the Law, the Shadows and patterns of <sup>q Παρὰ το- λή.</sup> Heavenly things <sup>p</sup>, a Figure or <sup>a</sup> Parable <sup>Heb. 9. 9.</sup> for

for the time then present, and the shadow  
 of good things to come<sup>r</sup>. Which Notion  
 of the Apostles is not only agreeable  
 to the Sentiments of the Jews in that  
 Age, as appears from many passages  
 in *Philo* and *Josephus*<sup>f</sup>, but 'tis ground-  
 ed upon the express Command of  
 God to Moses, when he bids him  
 make the Tabernacle and all its fur-  
 niture according to the Pattern which  
 he had seen in the Mount<sup>r</sup>: thereby  
 plainly intimating that this External  
 Institution was but an Imperfect Pat-  
 tern of a more Spiritual and Heav-  
 enly way of Worship. This Mystical  
 way of expressing and representing  
 things was in Vogue among the Wise  
 Men of the First Ages in the World,  
 and received in the Religious Rites and  
 Mysteries of all the Ancient, especial-  
 ly the Eastern Nations<sup>u</sup>. And there-  
 fore God, who, as has been observed  
 already<sup>w</sup>, adapted the Mosaical In-  
 stitutions to the Opinions and Cu-  
 stoms already receiv'd in the world,  
 thought fit so to contrive the Ceremo-  
 nial part of the Law, that the more  
 remarkable Rites and Usages of it  
 should be a shadow of Spiritual and  
 Heavenly things: and by this means  
 suited it both to the Greatest and  
 Meanest Capacities; retaining the  
 latter in a sense of their Duty, by the  
 Gaudi-

<sup>r</sup> Heb. 10.  
 1.

<sup>f</sup> Antiq. l.  
 3. c. 5.  
 see Wild.  
 9. 8.

<sup>r</sup> Exod.  
 25. 9.  
 Heb. 8. 5.

<sup>u</sup> V. Clem.  
 Alexand.  
 Strom. l.  
 5. per. tor.  
<sup>w</sup> P. 129.

Gaudiness and External Pomp of his Service, which struck and affected their Senses; and imploying the Inquisitive in the search of those Spiritual and Heavenly things, which were wrapt up in Figures and Shadows, and were the *Wisdom of God hid in a Mystery*. And as the Diligence of Industrious persons, and those who were Lovers of Truth, was sufficiently rewarded with the finding out of these *Deep things* of God which were hid under a Vail, so the Slothfulness of Carnal and Worldly Men and their Contempt of Divine Truths, was punish'd by leaving them in Ignorance, with the Veil still drawn over the Rites and Institutions of the Law, so that they could not look to the Ultimate End and Design of it. Which is the very Reason our Saviour gives, why he spake to the multitude in Parables, *Matth. 13. 11, &c.* where he tells his Disciples, that they who would not be at any pains in the search of the Truth, when it concerns their Souls, do not deserve to know it: whereas the Disciples that were careful Hearers of what Christ said unto them, were Rewarded with the *Knowledge of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*.

And

And since the Law had its double Meaning and Aspect, 'twas reasonable that the Prophets should have so too. The Jews having been used to this way of Instruction would expect it : The Reasons why God used it before, were the same still ; for the Jewish Nation, to whom the Prophets were sent, was the same Carnally minded people they ever were, their Thoughts were not much affected with any thing but Temporal Blessings, and therefore 'twas necessary to set forth the Glories of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, by the splendid Representations of Worldly Grandeur, which being a Happiness that they understood and valued, might serve to raise in their dull and earthly Minds, some Desire and Expectation of his Coming. Whereas if the nature of his Kingdom had been set forth plainly as it was in it self, the Spiritual Glories of it were too Refin'd for them to understand, they would have been *far above out of their sight*, and if they had seen some Glimpse of them, yet they would have discover'd no *Beauty in them that they should desire them*. 'Tis for this Reason the Prophets set forth the State of the Gospel, by the Representation of such things

things as were in Use among the Jews, and were most Glorious and Excellent in their Eyes to whom they wrote. So *Isaiab* expresses the Conspicuousness of Christ's Kingdom, and the Figure it was to make in the World, by saying that the *Mount of the Lord's House shall be establish'd upon the top of the mountains*. And both <sup>x</sup> *II. 2. 13* he and the Prophet *Zachary* describe the Conversion of the Gentiles, by the Nations going up to *Jerusalem* to worship there, and keep the solemn Feasts appointed by the Law, because, *II. 66.* Worshipping at *Jerusalem*, was the <sup>20. 23.</sup> highest Notion of Religious Wor- <sup>Zech. 14.</sup> ship which the Jews could apprehend. <sup>16.</sup> For the same Reason 'twas necessary, that the Temporal Deliverances which were wrought by those persons, whom God rais'd up to be Saviours to the Jews in their Distress, should be the Types and Figures of that great Salvation which the *Messias* was to purchase: And therefore 'twas fit that the Prophets should joyn both together in their Writings, and make use of the Former to illustrate the Latter by.

2. *God's making the Great Persons and remarkable Actions of Former Ages, the Types and Figures of what should come to pass in the Latter Days, the times of*  
the

<sup>a</sup> P. 127, *the Messias*, is as I observed before;  
128.

*an Argument that God made all his Dispensations subservient to this one Great Design, and made all the different Lines of his Providence meet in this one Center. This shews that the coming of*

*b* 1 Cor.

10. 11.

*c* Τύποι

συμβαινον

ἐκείνους.

*d* 1 Cor.

10. 2.

*e* 1 Pet. 3.

20, 21.

*f* Rom.

6. 9. &c.

Gal. 4. 21,

&c.

*St. Paul says<sup>b</sup>, that all things hapned to the Jews as Types<sup>c</sup>, of what should come to pass under the Gospel. And therefore he<sup>d</sup> and likewise St. Peter<sup>e</sup> speak of the Deluge and the Israelites passing thro the Red Sea, as Types of Baptism: he argues from Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael<sup>f</sup>, as Prefigurations of the Rejection of the Jews and the Calling of the Gentiles. And several other Allegorical Applications of the Rites and Histories of the Old Testament, to the times of the New, are to be found in the Apostolical Writings. Which kind of Interpretations are not so Precarious as some are apt to imagine, since besides that the Divine Assistance did certainly accompany these Expositors, and that this way of Interpreting Scripture was allowed by the Jews, for whose use the Writings of the Apostles were immediately and principally design'd.*



I say besides these Considerations, the Expositions themselves of this kind may be reduced to Fixt Rules and Principles, the chief of which are these two: The First, that which I mention'd just now out of St. Paul <sup>2</sup>; *g* 1 Cor.

The Second is this, viz. *Whatever Privileges belong'd to the Jews as the Se-gullah or Peculiar People of God, do in a more Eminent manner belong to the Christian Church, which is the Mystical Israel* <sup>b</sup>. Which Rules if Men would have a regard to, and take Directions from the Mystical Interpretations of the Old Testament which are to be found in the Writings of the Apostles, 'twould keep them from indulging their Fancies too much in these Expositions, and thereby making the Sense of Scripture Precarious, which are the usual Objections against this way of Expounding it, and to which many Men's Expositions of this kind are liable.

3. *A third Reason why the Prophecies should have a Mystical Sense as well as a Literal, may be taken from the Nature and Use of Prophecy in general, which makes it requisite that Prophecies should be deliver'd with some degree of Obscurity: and therefore the Involving a Mystical sense within a Literal One, is a proper Style for a Prophetical Writing,*

K

where

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. 10, 11.

<sup>b</sup> See 1 Pet. 2. 9.

compar.

Exod. 19.

5, 6. and

Deut. 7.

6.

1 Cor. 9.

13, 14.

2 Cor. 6.

16, 36.

where the matters spoken of ought not to be express'd in two plain words. I deny not but there are some plain Prophecies in Scripture, but as much the greater part of them have something of Obscurity, so I doubt not but to make it appear, that the Obscurity of the Prophecies is so far from being an Objection against them, as some pretend, that on the contrary, 'tis absolutely requisite that most Prophecies should be Obscure, or else they would not answer the Designs for which they were given, nor be Accomplish'd in a way agreeable to the Methods of Providence. But of this in the next Chapter.

The Sum of what I have hitherto said concerning the Authority of the Prophetical Writings is this ; That if we consider the Prophets only as men, that were the Teachers of Virtue and Religion, the least that can be said of them is, That in respect of their great Improvements in the several parts of Knowledge, the Excellency of their Precepts, the Integrity of their Lives, their Contempt of the World, and constant adhering to their Principles, they were equal to the greatest *Philosophers* : but if we consider them as Inlightned from above, and the Messengers of God to the

the world, they discover to us the Various Methods of the Divine Government, they unravel the Intricate Turnings and Windings of that Dark Labyrinth, they display the Scene of Providence, from the Beginning of this World to the End, and then give us a Prospect of Another to come: the Signal Accomplishment of their Predictions already fulfilled, confirms our Belief in Providence, and encourages us to trust in God, and in the Words of his Prophets for the Future. They do not open the Scene of things to come, only to gratify a Vain Curiosity, or with a Design to encourage the Belief of a Fatal Necessity, but to assure us that God interests himself in the Government of the World, that all things are Guided by his Unerring Hand, and that the Changes which come to pass in the World, are not the Effects of Blind Chance or Surly Fate, but the Results of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, which is able to bring Good out of Evil, and make the Rage and Fierceness, the Folly and Madness of man turn to God's Praise, and be Instrumental in bringing about his Great Purposes and Delights. Thus the Holy Prophets teach us to depend upon God, and acknowledge

that *our Sufficiency is of him*, and yet withal to believe that 'tis in our own Power in a great measure, whether we will be Happy or Miserable. Thus their Doctrine promotes God's Honour, without superseding men's Diligence and Indeavours, and instructs us to give him the Glory when we do well, and not to *charge him foolishly*, when we do amiss.

And as to their way of Writing, which includes a Hidden and Mysterious Sense under a Literal and Obvious one, this was agreeable to the Method of Instruction which the great Sages of World practis'd in those early Ages: 'Twas what the Jews had been accusom'd to, what they always believ'd to be the Style of Scripture, and so do still, tho it make against them; it tends to discover the Chain of Providence, and the Dependance which by the Appointment of the Divine Wisdom, the Occurrences of one Age have upon those of another which is at a great distance. The Prophets themselves have in most Cases, left us Certain Marks to know where we are to seek for Mysteries, and a Key to unlock their true Meaning: And where such an Indication is wanting, we have the Apostles to direct us, who have given abundant

Evidenre of their Divine Credentials, that they were appointed by God to be the Interpreters of his Oracles, and declare untous the Whole Councel of God.

## CHAP. IV.

*Wherein some Difficulties are Resolved relating to the PROPHETS themselves, or their manner of Writing.*

III. **I** Proceed to discourse concerning the Third General Head, I propos'd at the Beginning of the last Chapter to be consider'd, in relation to the Prophets: which is to *Resolve some Difficulties concerning the Prophets themselves or their Prophecies.* And here 'tis not my Design to give a particular Answer, to all the Objections that have been rais'd against the Prophetical Writings: most of which have been fully answer'd by several Excellent Writers of late<sup>a</sup>, not to mention the Ancients: I intend only in this Chapter to consider Two Difficulties, one relating to the Prophets themselves, and the other to their manner of Writing, which have

*a Bp. Stillingfleet, Orig. Sac. Letter to a Deist. Huetii demonst. Evangel. M. Smith. of Prophecy. Dr. Spencers Vagaries of Vulgar Prophecies.*

not yet, that I know of, been thoroughly Explain'd by any Writer: the First is, *The Obscurity of the Prophetical Writings*, the other, *Concerning the Marks and Signs whereby True Prophets were distinguish'd from False*. The latter of these Enquires is Embarrass'd with Great Difficulties, for the Scripture gives us very little Light in this matter, insomuch that one would wonder, since there are so many Contests between the True and False Prophets related in Scripture, and so many Cautions given against hearkening to False Prophets and Seducers, that there should be so little said concerning the Marks whereby they might be distinguish'd from the True ones.

I. I begin with the former Difficulty, viz. *The Obscurity of the Prophecies*. But here I shall first Premise that Obscurity is not Inseparable from Prophecy, for there are some very plain Prophecies in Scripture: as the Foretelling the 70. years Captivity of the Jews, and that Cyrus, after that time was expired, should Restore them to

b Jer. 25.  
11, 12.

-29. 10.

If. 44. 28.

c Dan. 2.

c. 7. c. 8.

their Land and Rebuild Jerusalem<sup>b</sup>, the Succession of the Monarchies in Daniel<sup>c</sup>, and those Prophecies concerning the Messias, which foretell his Coming, while the Second Temple was standing, and before the Destruction of the Jewish

Com-



*Commonwealth* <sup>d</sup>. But notwithstanding some few Exceptions, generally speaking, there is something of Obscurity in the Delivery of Prophecies. Now beside the Causes of this which arise from the Prophetical Style, which is full of Metaphors, and of lofty Expressions, such as naturally flow from a Heat of Fancy, where Great and Surprizing Ideas have made a deep Impression, besides this there are other Reasons to be assign'd for this Obscurity, which are taken from the very Nature and Design of Prophecies, and the manner how they are Fulfilled.

1. With Respect to the first of these, viz. the Design of Prophecies I lay down this Rule,

*That Prophecies are not so much design'd by God to give men the Knowledge of things beforehand, as to confirm mens Faith after they are come to pass, and convince them that this was God's Work.*

I willingly grant, that God did Reveal things to come to his Prophets, both to do them a particular Honour, <sup>e</sup> Gen. 18. by making them Privy to his secret Counsels and Designs, and likewise to prepare and fit men for the Blessings foretold, of which I have discours'd in the last Chapter <sup>f</sup>: but yet I think the Use of Prophecies chiefly consists in the Comparing the Event

<sup>d</sup> Dan. 9.  
25, &c.  
Hagg. 2.  
6.-9.  
Malac. 3.  
1.-4. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. 18.  
<sup>f</sup> p. 129,  
&c.

with the Prophecy which when they are found perfectly to agree, 'tis a great Evidence of God's Providence in General, and that this particular Event which the Prophecy relates to, was an effect of his Over-ruling Power. Those words of our Saviour to his Disciples are a proof of this Matter, *'Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when 'tis come to pass ye might believe. And there are several passages in the Prophets that plainly shew this was the Intent of many of their Prophecies. God himself gives this Reason why he foretold the Restauration of the Jewish Captivity', I have even from the beginning declar'd it to thee, before it came to pass I shewed it thee, lest thou shouldst say, My Idol hath done them, and my Graven Image, and my Molten Image hath commanded them. And such Events as the Jews were ready to ascribe to their Idols, if God had not prevented it, many others would willingly ascribe to Fate or Chance, and not acknowledge the hand of God in them. And therefore God to vindicate his Providence, and shew that he Interests himself in the Government of the world, and more especially in such Cases where his Church is concern'd,*  
has

f Joh. 14.  
29.

g II. 48. 5.

has been pleas'd to Foretell several Future Events, that when they came to pass, men might be convinc'd that they were the Lord's doing. The Event is certainly the best Comment upon Prophecies: and 'tis hard, if not impossible, to give any tolerable guess at the meaning of most of them, till they are near the time of being Accomplisht. And thus much is intimated in those Remarkable Passages of Daniel<sup>b</sup>: *Thou O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the Book even to the time of the End: Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* And to the same purpose, c. 8. 26. *Shut thou up the Vision, for yet it shall be for many days.* The meaning of which places is, "Lay this Prophecy up safe till after times, for it can't be understood as yet; but when the things themselves are near, and ready to be brought to pass, then men shall begin to understand it: the Gradual Completion of the Prophecies shall open their Understandings, and the comparing those parts of the Prophecy which are already fulfilled with the event, shall give light into, and direct Men to Judge of those particulars which are yet to be fulfilled. We find St. John<sup>k</sup> receives a Command quite contrary to this

<sup>b</sup> Dan.

<sup>12: 4.</sup>

<sup>See ver.</sup>

<sup>9, 10.</sup>

<sup>i See If.</sup>

<sup>29. 11.</sup>

<sup>Rev. 5. 2.</sup>

<sup>k Rev. 22.</sup>

<sup>10.</sup>

this which was given to *Daniel*, grounded upon the contrary Reason, *Seal not the sayings of the Prophecy of this Book, for the time is at hand.* 'Tis indeed very probable that a great part of the *Revelations* is not yet fulfill'd, and therefore one would think that this Prophecy might have been Order'd to be Seal'd up at the first Delivery of it as well as *Daniel's*. But the difference between these two Prophecies seems to lie here, that tho some parts of the *Revelations* belong to the Latter times of the Church, yet others relate to the First Ages of it, and upon that account 'twas fit that it should not be

- 1 Rev. 1. 3. Sealed up, but laid open to be Read and consider'd, from the very time when it was deliver'd, because the Accomplishment of some parts of it Commenc'd very early: and therefore the things contain'd in it, are said to be such as *must shortly come to pass* <sup>m</sup>. Whereas that Prophecy of *Daniel's* which relates to *Antichrist*, (and I suppose the Command of Sealing up the Book belongs only to that particular Prophecy, as will appear by comparing the Context of the two foremention'd passages <sup>n</sup> to-  
 v. and chap. 11. 36, &c. to the end of c. 12. The Vision is said to be a great while off, c. 10. 1, 14. with respect, I conceive, to the latter part of it.

gether)

gether) I say, the coming of *Antichrist* foretold by *Daniel*, was a great way off of *Daniel's* own time, and no part of the Prophecy relating to it, shortly to be accomplish'd.

I think from these places 'tis evident, that the Use of several Prophecies according to God's own Intention, did chiefly consist in Comparing them with the Event, after they were fulfill'd : And that they were in a manner useless, as a *Book* that is *Sealed* up, till the things themselves appear'd. Now if Prophecies were design'd to be Explained by the Event, this supposes that the words in which they are deliver'd, are not to be plain of themselves. But there is another Reason why God should not give Men a Clear and Distinct Knowledge of what is to come, and that is, because

2. *The fulfilling of Prophecies, if the things are distinctly Revealed, is Inconsistent with the Freedom of Humane Actions, and the Manner how Providence brings the things Foretold to pass: which is a second Reason why Prophecies should be Obscure.*

God always makes use of Men to be the Instruments of his Providence, but if they certainly knew what was to come to pass, and how it was to be brought to pass, they could not be Instru-

Instrumental in bringing it to pass in a Rational and Free way of acting; because it would not leave them wholly to themselves; to have a full Power over, and a free Determination of their own Actions. And that whether the thing foreknown be Good or Bad: if it be Good, it tempts Men to Carelessness, and to presume too much upon God's promise, for then Men are apt to argue thus, "What need we trouble ourselves with helping to fulfill God's promises, as if he were not able to bring about his Designs without our Assistance? God is obliged in Honour to see his Words made good, and we need not fear but he will take care that they be perform'd. On the other side, if the Prophecy foretell some Sinful Action to be committed, such a Prophecy would Humanely speaking, very often destroy it self, and the very foretelling it plainly, would hinder the thing foretold from coming to pass. For if such Prophecies were so plain that every body at first sight could see the whole Contrivance, and look thro all the Scenes of the Action, they could not be brought to pass without offering violence to Men's Voluntary Determinations, and making them purely Passive in producing the fore-



foretold Events, and meer Tools in the Hand of God Almighty. For Instance, if our Saviour's Crucifixion had been foretold with all the particular Circumstances, the Manner how, and the precise time when it was to be brought to pass, and the Persons that were to be concern'd in it, we can't imagine so many of the Chief and Principal<sup>2</sup> Men among the Jews  $\gamma$  1 Cor. would have had a Hand in it, with- 2. 8.

out being perfectly carried on to it by an Over-ruling Power against their own Inclinations: Which besides its thwarting the Principles of Humane Nature, must make God the Author of Sin. But since the Prophecies concerning the *Messias* and his Sufferings, were deliver'd with such a mixture of Obscurity as never to be fully understood till after the Event, this gave Room for the Jews Malice to concur with God's Providence in bringing this to pass, and so as St. Paul <sup>a</sup> Acts tells them, "*Because they knew him not, 13. 27. nor yet the voices of the Prophets, they fulfill'd them in condemning him.*"

Again, as plainly foretelling who are to be actors in Wickedness, would, without supposing manifest Violence offer'd to Men's inclinations in many Cases hinder some of them from being Instrumental it bringing about  
God's

God's Designs, so perhaps it would be a new Temptation to others, and make them more furiously bent upon Evil: just as the mentioning wickedness stirs up some Men's Ill Inclinations, and makes them eager to commit it. Especially since the foretelling it as certainly to come to pass, affords a Plea for men's Wickedness: for Men that are bent upon Evil, and are glad of any Colour to justify their Sin, will conclude from thence, that it can be no Sin to be subservient to God's Providence, and Assisting in the Accomplishment of his Will and Purpose; or if it be a Sin, it must lie at his door. And when, once Men come to fantasie themselves design'd by Providence to fulfill Prophecies, there is no sort of Wickedness which they stick at, but will persuade themselves that Murder, Sedition, and the greatest Villainies are doing God good Service. So that if Prophecies were too plainly deliver'd, this would often be the consequence, that the bringing the Event to pass would be wholly imputed to the Clearness of the Prediction: just as Publick Commotions do often take their Rise from the spreading about of Prophecies concerning the Death of the Prince or the Change of the Govern-

Government. Now this is contrary to God's method of dealing with Men : for tho we cannot comprehend after what manner he foresees how Free Agents will determine themselves, yet we have all the Reason in the World to believe, that God's Prescience does not Interfere with Mens Free-will. And therefore as we believe that things do not come to pass meerly, because God Foresees them, but rather that he Foresees them because their own proper Causes will bring them to pass : So 'tis agreeable to the methods of Providence, that Prophecies should be so worded, as not to have any Influence upon the parties concern'd in bringing them about ; that might not be said, The thing came to pass because it was Foretold, but it was Foretold because it would come to pass, as an Ordinary effect of a Natural Cause. 'Tis true indeed, we may observe that some Scripture Prophecies by being too plainly deliver'd, have made the *Hearts of Wicked Men wholly set in them,* to bring to pass *the Evil* foretold <sup>b.</sup> See 1. King. 11. 31, 32. 2 King. 8. 12, 13, 15. 10. 10.

But as these are but few, so they are sufficient to convince us of the Inconveniences which must attend the too plain delivery of Prophecies. And perhaps God might give some Instances

ces of this kind, on purpose to take off the minds of the Jews from that greedy desire they had to search into Futurity, when they saw what Ill Consequences did sometimes attend that Knowledge. The Sum of the Argument is this: that the Evil which if Foretold Darkly and Obscurely, needed nothing to bring it to pass, but only God's suffering Men's Wickedness to break out, and permitting them to act according as their Ill Inclinations prompt them: if it were Foretold Plainly and Clearly, could not be effected without supposing him to offer Violence to Humane Nature, and making him a Party concern'd, and a Tempter of Men to Wickedness.

From all that has been said upon this head it appears, that whether the thing foretold be Good or Evil, the foretelling it too Punctually and Distinctly, would make Prophecy a *Felo de se*, and be an effectual way to defeat its Accomplishment, for then it could not be brought to pass in a way that is suitable to the Divine Purity and Wisdom. For this is one of the Master-pieces of the Divine Wisdom, to bring about its Designs in such a manner, as never to put any Force upon the Freedom of Man's Will

Will, so that the Events may rather seem the Natural Effects of Free-Agents, than the Works of an Over-ruling Providence. To this purpose speaks the Author of the Book of Wisdom, *Thy Wisdom, O Lord, reacheth from one end to another Mightily, and Sweetly doth she order all things.* <sup>8. 1.</sup> God sees every Link of that Vast Chain of Causes, and knows how they depend upon each other: What Force each Circumstance has in determining Mens Resolutions, and what it is that turns the Balance of the Mind one way or t'other: And therefore tho' he brings to pass all his Purposes in an Irresistable manner, yet he does it withall in so Easie and Gentle a one, that the Events look like the Result of Mens own Free Determinations, and one would think that the Natural Agents, let alone to themselves would have produc'd the same Effect.

These two Reasons fully justify the Obscurity of Prophecies, and shew us the Use of them, that we are not to look upon them as deliver'd meerly to gratify the Curiosity men have to pry into what is Future, but to be an Argument to us of Gods Over-ruling Providence, which extends it self to the most Minute Actions, and very

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often makes such Accidents, as seem to us to be Trivial and Insignificant, Instrumental in bringing to pass the Greatest and most Surprising Events: and especially to shew us, That nothing befalls his Church but by his determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge.

I will conclude this Head with a Brief Caution to those, who do not think the Prophecies concerning Christ and the Gospel Clear enough to be an Argument for our Belief: and that is this, That they ought not to expect that the Prophecies should give as distinct an Account of Christ as the Gospels do, nor because they do not, should they slight them as Insignificant: but they should first of all consider the Evidence of Truth, which the Gospel brings along with it, and then Compare it with the Prophecies. And thus, tho the Prophecies be Obscure in themselves, yet when they are compar'd with the Event, as they will receive Light from it, so they will add Light to it. just as that Obscure Saying of our Saviour's, <sup>d</sup>, *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, was not understood by his Disciples when he spoke it, but afterward when they Compar'd it with the Event which it foretold, it

was

*d* Joh. 2.  
19.



was a new Argument to them that he came forth from God<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 22.

II. Another Difficulty concerning Prophecy, the Resolving of which will tend to Establish the Authority of the Prophets, is, *Concerning the Signs whereby True Prophets were distinguish'd from False ones.* 'Tis plain by the Prophe-tick Writings, that there were False Prophets that oppos'd themselves to the True ones, and utter'd quite contrary Prophecies to theirs. But tho the True Prophets, warn the People often not to be seduc'd by these False pre-tenders, yet we can discover but little out of their Writings concerning the Marks whereby the True Prophets, were to be distinguish'd from the False ones. Those which I can gather from the Holy Writings are these followyng.

1. *If a Prophet indeavour'd to perswade the people to Idolatry, this was a certain Mark that he was a False Prophet, tho he should confirm what he said by a Sign.* This Rule is laid down by Moses<sup>e</sup>, <sup>e</sup> Deut. 13. 1. and is grounded upon very good rea-  
son: For since God had manifested his Power to the Israelites by so many Undeniable Miracles and Proofs, 'twas not reasonable that working a single Wonder, or foretelling one Event which might come to pass by meer Chance, should overthrow the Au-

g Deut.  
13. 3.  
Matth.  
24. 24.

h Exod.  
8. 12.

i V. Orig.  
c. Cels. l.  
I. p. 53.  
l. 2 p. 90,  
91. Ed.  
Cant.  
Bp. Stil-  
lingfl.  
Orig.  
sacr. l. 2.  
c. 10.

thority of so many more and greater Works. For tho God doth suffer Impostors to work Strange Feats sometimes for the Trial of his people<sup>g</sup>, yet I doubt not but he always takes care that his own Works shall visibly exceed theirs, both in *Power*, in *Gravity*, and in *Usefulness*: so that their *Tricks* shall appear as just nothing when compar'd with his Miracles as *Aaron's Rod swallowed up those of the Magicians*<sup>h</sup>. Or else God would allow too great an Authority to Impostors, and make Miracles by themselves no Evidence of a Divine Mission, since 'twould be in some Cases impossible to distinguish True ones from Counterfeit. And this I take to be a satisfactory Answer to that Question, *Whether God's permitting Evil Spirits and Seducers to shew Signs and Wonders, does not evacuate the Authority of Miracles in general*: tho I grant there are other Marks<sup>i</sup> whereby to distinguish True Miracles from False, which 'tis not my Business at present to discourse of.

2. 'Tis reasonable to think that the Prophets, when they first entred upon their Prophetick Office, gave some Sign of their Mission, either by working a Miracle, or by revealing some Secret, Remote or Future thing, which was not within the

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*Compass of Humane Knowledge, and the Nature of which was such, that a little time would quickly discover, whether the Prophet spake True or not.* We may find footsteps in Scripture of these several ways being accounted the Marks of a Prophet. We find the Pharisees demand a sign from Heaven <sup>k</sup> of our Saviour, such as Joshua <sup>1</sup>, Samuel <sup>m</sup>, <sup>16. 1.</sup> Isaiah <sup>n</sup>, and Elias <sup>o</sup> had wrought. And <sup>Joh. 6.</sup> the Samaritan Woman judg'd our Saviour to be the Christ, because he <sup>Math.</sup> told her all things that ever she did, <sup>12. 38.</sup> <sup>1</sup> Jos. 10. This shews that in the common Opinion, the Discovering of some Hidden thing, and out of the ordinary reach of Humane Knowledge, was <sup>12. 18.</sup> esteem'd the Mark of a Prophet: and <sup>2</sup> Is. 38. the Messiah being the Prophet the Jews <sup>0 2 King.</sup> at that time Expected, the Woman <sup>1. 10.</sup> concludes from thence that he who <sup>p</sup> John 4. knew such Secrets must be the Messiah. And perhaps for this Reason the Jews who lookt upon our Saviour as a Pretender only to Prophecy, demand of him the Discovery of a <sup>q</sup> *Mock-secret*, viz. *Who it was that* <sup>Math.</sup> *smote him when he was Blindfolded.* <sup>26. 68.</sup>

It appears from other places, that the Prophets did commonly foretell something which should Shortly come to pass, and the Accomplishment of this their Prediction did establish

their Authority for the Future, and gave Credibility to those Prophecies of theirs, whose Accomplishments was at a greater distance. So the Man of God that *Prophefied against the altar of Bethel*<sup>g</sup>, beside his foretelling  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Kings 13. 1, 2. above 300. years before the Birth of that Prince, that one of *David's* Family, *Josiah* by name, should Defile that Altar; at the same time gave another Sign of his Mission that was presently to come to pass, viz. *that the Altar should be rent, and the Ashes of it pour'd out*<sup>r</sup>. The fulfilling of which was an Argument of his Veracity as to the other part of his Prophecy; where the Event was at such a Distance, that tho it should not Correspond with the Prophecy, it could not at present be Disproved, and therefore the bare Foretelling it did not bring along with it sufficient Evidence that the Prophet who spoke it, was really sent from God. In like manner 'tis said of *Samuel*<sup>f</sup>, that *all Israel knew him to be an establisht Prophet of the Lord's*, when they saw that *none of his Prophetick words fell to the Ground*. So *Ezekiel* having deliver'd a Prediction, adds, *'When this shall come to pass, then they shall know that a Prophet has been among them: as if he had said,*

"How-

f 1 Sam.  
3. 19, 20.  
c. 9. 6.

r Ezek.  
33. 33.

"However Men may slight my  
 "Words now, and value them no  
 "more than a *Song*" which Men hear-<sup>u</sup> ver. 32.  
 "ken to only to pass away the time,  
 "yet the fulfilling of what I say will  
 "establish my Authority beyond  
 "Contradiction. Which is an Ar-  
 gument that Men commonly suspend-  
 ed their Judgment concerning the  
 Authority of a Prophet, till they had  
 Tried his Veracity, by seeing whe-  
 ther some one Prophecy of his, which  
 he delivered as a Test of his Mission,  
 came to pass or no.

3. *Tho' Prophets usually gave a Sign  
 in Testimony of their Mission, yet Some  
 Prophets did not, who were therefore to  
 be Tried by other Rules.*

'Tis Recorded particularly of *John  
 Baptist*, that he *did no Miracle*<sup>z</sup>, and <sup>x</sup> *John*.  
 yet the people counted him a Prophet<sup>y</sup>, <sup>10. 41.</sup>  
 which they would not have done, if<sup>y</sup> <sup>Matth.</sup>  
 a Prophet had always given a Sign, <sup>21. 26.</sup>  
 before he was accounted so: and we  
 see that even the Priests and Elders  
 could not find any thing to Object  
 against his Authority<sup>z</sup>. Now in such <sup>z</sup> *Ibid*  
 a Case, I suppose they judged of <sup>ver. 25.</sup>  
 a Prophet's Pretences by some of these  
 following Tokens, by the *Holiness of*  
*his Life and Doctrine*, by the *Agree-*  
*ment of what he said with the Predictions*  
*or discourses of other Prophets*, and espe-

cially if another Prophet of undoubted Authority bare Witness to him : according to that Maxim of the Jewish Masters<sup>a</sup>, *The Prophet, of whom some other Undoubted Prophet witnesseth that he is a Prophet, is assuredly such.* All these Marks concurr'd in *John Baptist*; his Office was plainly describ'd by *Isaiab*<sup>b</sup>, and both that and his Person by *Malachi*<sup>c</sup>: his Doctrine was Holy, and his Life an exact Copy of what he taught; so here was no room to suspect him a Counterfeit, tho he gave no Sign to attest his Mission.

We may farther observe, that the Prophets of the Old Testament insist upon these three things, *viz Purity of Doctrine, Holiness of Life and Agreement with other Prophets* as the Tokens whereby they distinguish themselves from the False Prophets. They tell us, there is as plain a difference between the Visions of True Prophets and the Dreams of false Ones, as *betwixt Chaff and Wheat*<sup>d</sup>: which must be upon this account, that the one sort tends to discourage Sin, and set forth the terrible Consequences of it<sup>e</sup>, whereas the other designs to sooth Men up in their Vices by *Healing the Wounds* of the Conscience *Slightly*, saying, *Peace, Peace*, and promising Men Prosperity without

<sup>a</sup> Maimonid. Fundam. Legis. c. 10. Sect. 9.  
<sup>b</sup> II. 40. 3.  
<sup>c</sup> Mal. 3. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Jer. 23. 28.

<sup>e</sup> Ibid. ver. 29.

<sup>f</sup> Jer. 6. 14.



out their Repentance and Amend-  
 ment of Life. To the same purpose  
 Ezekiel says of the False Prophets,  
 that they *Sow pillows to men's elbows*<sup>g</sup>, Ezek.  
 that they may sleep on securely in <sup>13. 18.</sup>  
 their sins. The True Prophets ac- <sup>b</sup> Jer. 6.  
 cuse the false Ones of Several Vices <sup>13.</sup>  
 in their Conversation and Manner <sup>Ezek. 13.</sup>  
 of Living: of making <sup>h</sup> a gain of <sup>19.</sup>  
 their profession, and speaking *smooth* <sup>Mich. 3:</sup>  
*things* for advantage: of Adultery <sup>k</sup> *This was*  
 and Riot <sup>1</sup>, of being Fearless and Un- <sup>one of the</sup>  
 concern'd at God's Judgments, and <sup>Argu-</sup>  
 not endeavouring by Prayers or other <sup>ments</sup>  
 eminent acts of Piety to avert them <sup>m.</sup> *made use*  
 And as to the other Mark of True Monta- <sup>of to prove</sup>  
 Prophets, viz. their Agreement with <sup>nus his fol-</sup>  
 other Prophets we find *Jeremy Ap-* <sup>lowers</sup>  
*pealing* to it, in the Contest between <sup>False Pro-</sup>  
 him and *Hananiah*, who Prophe- <sup>phets, be-</sup>  
*ed*<sup>a</sup> of the return of *Jechoniah's* Cap- <sup>cause they</sup>  
*tivity*, contrary to what *Jeremy* had <sup>took Money</sup>  
*foretold*. Upon which *Jeremy* tells <sup>for Pro-</sup>  
*him* <sup>o</sup>, *The Prophets that were before me* <sup>beside that</sup>  
*and before thee of old, prophesied of War* <sup>they were</sup>  
*and Evil and Pestilence, the Prophet that* <sup>guilty of</sup>  
*prophesieth of Peace, when the word of* <sup>Theft and</sup>  
*the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall* <sup>other</sup>  
*the Prophet be known that the Lord* <sup>Crimes. v.</sup>  
*hath sent him.* Where *Jeremy* argues <sup>Euseb. H.</sup>  
 against the Truth of *Hananiah's* Pro- <sup>E. l. 5. c. 18.</sup>  
<sup>i</sup> *Isa. 30.*

<sup>k</sup> Jer. 23. 14. -- 29. 23. / <sup>l</sup> *Is. 28. 7.* <sup>m</sup> *Mic. 2. 11.* <sup>n</sup> *Ezek.*  
<sup>3.</sup> <sup>5.</sup> *Jer. 27. 18.* <sup>n</sup> *Jer. 28. 3, 4.* <sup>o</sup> *Ib. ver. 8, 9.*

phency

phesy, and proves that what himself had prophesied was much more Credible of the two, because many other Prophets agreed with him in prophesying evil against the Jews, and several other Countries, whereas he being single in his Prophecy concerning Peace, nothing but the Punctual Answering of the Event, could give him the Authority of a Prophet: and people must Suspend their judgments till time should discover whether he were in the right or no. Which place seems likewise to imply, that *Hananiab* had never before given a Sign to attest his Mission, and therefore his Credit would justly be questionable, till men could see whether his Word came to pass or not.

From what has been said, we may conclude it probable, that where a Prophet gave no Sign whereby men might make Tryal of the Reality of his Pretensions, they made a judgment of it by considering his Education, whether he had been brought up in the *Schools of the Prophets*, which were the Seminaries of Inspir'd persons; by examining his manner of Life, his Doctrine, and his Agreement with other Prophets: and the more any of these was liable to Exceptions the more need was there that he should

should give a Sign to attest his Mission. So for Example, 'twas more requisite that *Amos* should give a Sign who was no Prophet by Education, or Prophets Son, but a Herdsman, by Profession, than any of those Prophets who were of the Priestly Order, or brought up among the Sons of the Prophets.

## CH A P. V.

*Concerning the Inspiration of the Canonical Books of the Old Testament in General, and of the Historical and Poetical Books in Particular.*

**T**HE Two Preceding Chapters concerning Prophecy being a Digression with respect to the Book which I undertook to Answer tho not with Respect to the General Design of this Treatise, which is to *Vindicate the Authority of the Scriptures*: I return to Mr. N's Memorial, as 'tis Communicated by the Author of the Letters, and shall Examine in this Chapter the Exceptions which he makes against the Authority of the Old Testament Writings.

Writings. Which are of two sorts, General and Particular: The General Exceptions are levell'd against the Authority of the Old Testament Canon, which this Author supposes<sup>a</sup> to consist of all the Ancient Writings, whether perfect or Imperfect, whether inspir'd or not, which were remaining among the Jews at the time when this Collection was made. The Particular Exceptions relate to Particular Books, which he supposes not to be Inspir'd, either because the matter of them is such as Men may know and faithfully relate without Inspiration, such as are the Historical Books<sup>b</sup>: or else because they contain something in them which is Unworthy of God being its Author, which Exception he advances against several Passages in the Psalms and the Proverbs, and against the Intire Books of Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Fr. p. 279.

En. p. 106.

<sup>b</sup> Fr. p. 233.

En. p. 31.

<sup>c</sup> Fr. p. 271, &c.

Eng. p.

93, &c.

In Answer to these Twofold Exceptions, I shall,

- I. Say something concerning the Authority and Inspiration of the Old-Testament Canon in general.
- II. I shall make a reply to his Objections against the Particular Books which are part of this Canon.

I. As

1. As to the First, it must be confess'd that we cannot give an Exact Account, by whose Authority the Canon of the Old Testament was settled, for we have no Writings extant that give us an History of that Affair. But 'tis very probable the Collection of the Canonical Books was made in *Ezra's* time, or not long after: 1. Because the Scripture-History ends about that time. I know nothing of later date in it, than the mention of *Jaddus* by *Nebemiah*<sup>d</sup> who was Contemporary with *Ezra*, which *Jaddus* was High Priest at the Beginning of *Alexander the Great's* Reign. And whatever others may have objected to the contrary, the mentioning of this *Jaddus*, is very reconcilable with the time when *Nebemiah* writ, as a Great Prelate has lately made out with Incomparable Learning and Clearness<sup>e</sup>. 2. Because *Malachi* the Prophet, that lived much about the same time, seems to Seal up the Vision and Prophecy among the Jews, by referring them to the Law of *Moses* as their standing Instructor, till the Gospel should be revealed: and pointing out to *Elias* the Fore-runner of the *Messiah*, as the next great Prophet that was to be reveal'd<sup>f</sup>. And indeed his Prophecy

<sup>d</sup> Neh.  
12.10, 22.

<sup>e</sup> Letter  
to Dr.  
Sherlock  
about a  
passage in  
*Josephus*,  
&c.

<sup>f</sup> Mal. 4:  
4, 5.  
looks

g See

1 Macc.

4. 46.

-9. 27.

-14. 41.

h Eccclus.

36. 14,

15. 16.

i Walton

Prole-

gom. 9.

in Bibl.

Polygl.n.

11.

Vales. in

Euf. H.E.

l. 5. c. 8.

k Vales.

ibid.

Euf. H.E.

f. 7. c. 32.

l Eccclus.

49. 10.

looks as if it were design'd to Connect the Old and New Testament together, by putting a period to the Old Testament Revelation, and directing men to the New for further Instruction. This Argument will appear more probable, if we consider, 3. That under the *Maccabees*, the Jews look'd upon the Gift of Prophecy as wholly ceased, and were of Opinion it had been so for a Considerable time<sup>e</sup>. The same Opinion is confirm'd not long after by the Author of *Ecclesiasticus*<sup>i</sup>. 4. If we suppose the *LXX. Interpreters* Translated all the Old Testament, which is an Opinion that Learned men<sup>i</sup> have brought good Reasons for; then 'tis plain the Canon must have been settled before the time when that Version was made, which was done under *Ptolomee Philadelphus*, and as 'tis very probable, at the Beginning of his Reign<sup>k</sup>. 5. However that be, yet 'tis certain that when the Book of *Ecclesiasticus* was writ the Canon of the Old Testament was settled: for he makes mention of the *Twelve Prophets* all together<sup>l</sup>, which is an Argument that the Smaller Prophets were then Collected, and Compil'd into one Book, which Book was afterward call'd the

Book



*Book of the Prophets* . Nay further m See  
 the Author of the *Prologue* to that Act. 7.  
*Book*, speaks of the *Law*, *Prophets* 42.  
 and other *Books of Scripture*, as then Justin M.  
 Translated into *Greek*, which is an c. Tryph.  
 Undeniable Argument that the *Ca-*  
*non* was then Completed. And tho p. 45. 50.  
 we suppose that *Prologue* to be made 57. (Ed.  
 by the Grandchild of the principal Steph.)  
 Author *Jesus the Son of Syrach*, which Cyprian:  
 Younger *Syracides* lived in the time Epist. 59.  
 of *Evergetes II.* commonly called Ed. Oxon.  
*Ptolomee Physcon*: yet it appears by the  
 Beginning of that *Prologue*, that his  
 Grandfather studied the same Holy  
 Books, which he afterwards says  
 were turn'd into *Greek*. And this  
 Elder *Syracides* speaks of *Simon* the son  
 of *Onias* the High Priest, as one whom  
 he very well remembered: now that n c. 50.  
*Simon* was High Priest in the Begin- 1, &c.  
 ning of *Philopator's* Reign °, who was ° See  
 next in Succession but one to *Phila-*  
*delphus*. So that the Canon of Scrip- 3 Macc:  
 ture will appear to be as old as *Phila-*  
*delphus's* time, because 'tis evident 2. 1. com.  
 from hence that 'twas Translated all with c. 1.  
 into *Greek* in a little time after, tho 1.  
 we should not suppose the whole  
 work performed by the LXX. Last-  
 ly, to these Considerations we may  
 add the Concurring Testimony of all  
 the *Ancient Writers*, both Jewish and  
 Christi-

Christian, who agree in supposing the Canon of the Old Testament, to have been Compil'd in or about *Ezra's* time, and who probably had the Authority of some Ancient Writers for what they say, which now are lost. And if these Considerations taken all together, have any Force in them to prove the Canon of the Old Testament, to have been settled in *Ezra's* time, or in the next Age; I say if it were settled so early, this very thing will add great Weight to its Authority.

For, 1. 'tis agreed on all hands that *Ezra*, who calls himself a *Ready Scribe* *p* *Ezr.* 7. *in the Law of Moses*<sup>a</sup>, Revis'd the 6. Holy Writings, Retriev'd them from the Corruptions, which the Scarcity of Copies, and the Disuse of the *Hebrew* Language during the Captivity, had brought into them: supplied and completed many of them, and put them into Order and Method: And when a man of so great Authority as *Ezra* was, had done all this so lately, it cannot be imagin'd but that the Compilers of the Canon, must have had a particular Regard to his Judgment, and admitted no Books into their Collection, but what were allow'd of by *Ezra*: or if they were of Later date than his time, the Writing

ting of them must have been within the Memory of these Compilers, so that they were proper Judges, whether a Book deserv'd to be esteem'd Sacred or not. So that from hence 'twill follow, that the Authority of the main Body of the Canon, bottoms upon the Judgment and Authority of *Ezra* : whom if we should grant to have been no Prophet, yet we cannot think, but in a matter of such Moment, as the Revising and putting in order the Holy Writings, he would not only use the Best Skill he had himself, but likewise consult with *Haggai*, *Zachary* or *Malachi* ; (the last of which must needs have been alive in his time, and possibly the other Two also) and do nothing without their Advice. For we find that at the first Return from the Captivity, in a matter of much less moment, viz. where some that pretended to the Priesthood could not prove their Pedigree, the Governour would determine nothing, but left the matter undecided, till a Priest should arise who had *Urim* and *Tbummim* <sup>9</sup>. And if any such Priest did <sup>9</sup> *Ezr.* 2. arise afterward, as, if we believe *Josephus*, there did ; for he tells us that <sup>62, 63.</sup> *Antiq.* that Oracle ceas'd but 200. years <sup>Jud. l. 3.</sup> <sup>c. 9. p. 90.</sup> before his time ; 'tis very probable <sup>G. Ed.</sup>

M

that Gen.

that the Judgment of the Canonical Books was left to him, to determine which were such, as the Learned Mr. Dodwell has made appear in the

*f* Sect. 9. *Appendix* 'to his Lectures.

x Fr. P.  
279.  
Eng. p.  
106.

2. This Early date of the Canon of the Old Testament, quite destroys that Fancy of our Authors \*, that the *Jews* put together all the Fragments that remain'd of their Ancient Books, so that the Canon of Scripture was their whole Library. For in the First place 'tis plain, that the *Chronicles* are Extracts out of larger Records, which they often Refer to, and yet these Books were Compil'd after the Return from the Captivity, as appears by several passages ' in them: and 'tis not likely that the Originals which escaped the Destruction of Records, occasion'd by the Ruine of the Commonwealth and the Captivity which ensu'd, should be lost in so little a time as was between the Compiling the *Chronicles*, and making the Canon. Especially since *Josephus* <sup>2</sup> tells us, 'that the *Genealogies* of the High-Priests and their Succession, for above Two Thousand years past, were preserv'd in the Publick Records, and remain'd to his own time.

y 1 Chr.  
3. 17. &  
ch. 9. 2,  
&c. comp.  
with Neh.  
ch. 11, 3.  
&c.  
2 Chr. 36.  
21, &c.  
3 L. 1. c.  
App. p.  
136. D.

Again, several Books which never were in the Canon, were Extant when

when the New Testament was writ,  
 and are Cited there as Writings of  
 Credit and Antiquity; such as are  
 the *Prophecy of Enoch*, and the *Assump-  
 tion of Moses*, both referr'd to by St.  
*Jude*<sup>a</sup>: as also several other Ancient<sup>a</sup> *Jude* 9.  
 Books, from whence both Christ and 14.  
 his Apostles take many Passages con-  
 cerning Historical Matters, which  
 are not Extant in the Canonical Wri-  
 ters<sup>b</sup>. And 'twas from such Ancient<sup>b</sup> See  
 Writings probably, that *Josephus* took *Matth.*  
 some Stories which he relates of *Mo-* 23. 37.  
*ses*<sup>c</sup> and of other Persons. Besides *Luk.* 4.  
 we find *Apocryphals* quoted by *Bar-* 25.  
*nabas* in every Page of his *Epistle* al- *Jam.* 5.  
 most; by *Clemens Alexandrinus* and *17.*  
 other Ancient Writers in several *Act.* 7.  
 places, many of which 'tis likely, *22, 52.*  
 were Written Originally in *Hebrew*, *Heb.* 11:  
 since by the Matters they Treat of, *37.-12.*  
 we may reasonably judge them to be *21.*  
 as old as the Collection of the Canon: *2 Tim.*  
 and were certainly lookt upon as *3. 8.*  
 Books of great Antiquity, or else they *V. Orig.*  
 would not have been Cited by these *Epist. ad*  
 Authors under the Venerable name *African.*  
 of Scripture. From all which it ap- *e Antiq.*  
 pears, that the Compilers of the Ca- *l. 2. c. 5.*  
 non did not take in Promiscuously  
 what-ever *Hebrew* Writings they could  
 find; but used all possible diligence  
 to distinguish Sacred Writings, and  
 M 2 such

such as were design'd by God for the Use of the Church, from those which were not so. The Reasons which Confute this Opinion of our Author, concerning the Collection of the Canon of the Old Testament, I thought fit to represent all together, when I was upon this Subject, tho I am sensible that 'tis only the first of these Considerations, which can be inferr'd as a Corollary from what has been said concerning the Early Date of the Old Testament Canon.

What I have hitherto said concerning the Authority and Antiquity of the Old Testament Canon, I cannot call Absolutely Certain or Demonstrative; but I may safely say thus much; that it carries in it a greater Degree of Probability, than any thing the Adversaries of the Canon have advanc'd to the Contrary. So that tho we should grant what our Author says *a*, *That there is no proof at all that Esdras and the Great Sanhedrim of that time, among whom were Haggai, Zachary and Malachi, Compil'd the Canon*; yet still 'tis probable 'twas made by those that were so near their time, that they knew what their Sentiments were in this Matter, and made this Collection accordingly.

d Fr. p.  
276.  
Eng. p.  
102.



But if this Proof be not thought Satisfactory, I should think any Christian ought to acquiesce in the Judgment of our Saviour: and 'tis plain he lookt upon the Jewish Canon, which was Undoubtedly the same in his time, which is now received in the *Protestant Churches*: I say, he lookt upon it as a Collection of Holy Writings design'd by God for the Instruction of his Church, and the Rule the Jews were to have recourse to, when they would inform themselves what was the Will of God. He bids them \* *Search the Scriptures*, with-<sup>e</sup> Joh 5. out distinguishing as our Author<sup>39</sup>. does †, the Truly Inspir'd Books<sup>f</sup> Fr. p. from those which are not so: for in<sup>277</sup>, them, saith he, *ye think*, and so far<sup>279, 285</sup>. ye are in the right, *that ye have Eter-* Eng. p. *nal Life*. 'Tis strange our Saviour<sup>103, 106</sup>. should not correct this Mistake of<sup>116</sup>. theirs, if some of the Books they had such a great Veneration for, favour'd such Dangerous Doctrines as our Author thinks the Book of *Ecclesiastes* does ‡, and contain'd *Expressions very* g Fr. p. *like Blasphemies*, as he is pleas'd to<sup>272</sup>. speak concerning the Book of Job<sup>h</sup>. Eng. p. For if this were true, 'twas certainly<sup>96</sup>. very dangerous for Men to *Search*, or<sup>b</sup> Fr. p. be too much Conversant in these<sup>275</sup>. Books, especially since they came Re<sup>Eng. p.</sup> 101.

i Luk.  
24. 44.

k Fr. p.  
277.  
Eng. p.  
103.

l Fr. p.  
278.  
Eng. p.  
104, 105.

m Matt.  
3. c. 23.  
n c. 15. 1.

o Fr. p.  
272, &c.  
Eng. p.  
95, &c.

commended under the Character of a Divine Inspiration. 'Tis strange our Saviour <sup>i</sup> should prove the Passion and Resurrection of the Messias, not only out of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, but also out of the *Psalms*; by which our Author <sup>k</sup> understands those Writings which the Jews call *Chetubim*, if these Books be of so little Authority, as he would perswade us they are. Mr. N. would fain Evade the Force of this Argument taken from our Saviours Authority, by telling us <sup>l</sup>, that Christ never design'd to Criticize upon the Sacred Books, or to Correct those Errors of the Jews, which were of small Importance. But since our Saviour Criticiz'd so far upon the Sacred Books, as to Confute the false Glosses <sup>m</sup> which the Scribes and Pharisees had made upon them, and to Reject the Traditions <sup>n</sup> which they had Equall'd to the Word of God, and in some Cases Preferr'd before it: it seems as necessary for him to have distinguish'd between the True Scriptures, and those Books which were Undeservedly esteem'd such. Especially if these Latter advance Doctrines, that do not well agree with the Former, as our Author <sup>o</sup> in-deavours to prove, concerning several places of the *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes* and

and *Job*: for then the Admitting the Authority of such Writings, is of as Ill Consequence as the Receiving the Traditions of the Pharisees could be. Nay with his leave, I think it an Error of more dangerous Consequence, to Equal a Book that is not Inspir'd when it contains False Doctrine, with one that is truly Divine, than to Equal such Traditions as the Pharisees held, with an Inspir'd Writing. Because a Tradition will probably in time be forgotten, and so lose all its Authority, which we see has been the Fate of most of the *Pharisaical* Traditions; whereas a Book that has once been generally Reputed of Divine Authority, 'tis likely will maintain that Character for ever. For its very Character will make Men careful to preserve it, and the Older it grows, the Stronger will the Plea of Prescription be for its Divine Original: and Consequently the More will be impos'd upon by it, as we see hath Actually happen'd in the Case we are now speaking of, if our Author's Opinion be true. For the whole Christian and Jewish Church time out of mind, have lookt upon the Books contain'd in the Jewish Canon to be Inspir'd, and have upon all Occasions appeal'd to

their Authority as such. From whence it appears, that our Saviours taking notice of this Error, if it had been one, would have been much more beneficial to after Ages, than his Confuting an Unwritten Tradition could be.

But further we find, the Apostles Judgment does evidently concur with our Saviours in this matter. St. Paul

<sup>a</sup> Rom. 3. says <sup>a</sup>, that *the Jews were intrusted<sup>b</sup> with the Oracles of God*: but surely he would have told us that they were not True to their Trust, if

2.  
<sup>b</sup> ἐπιστεύθησαν.  
ἡννοῦν.

he had thought they had mix'd Prophane Books with the Sacred ones.

But that Text of the same Apostle,

<sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. 3. 16. <sup>c</sup> *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*, is so clear a Proof of the

Apostles Judgment in this matter, that 'twill admit of no Evasion.

For the Apostle tells *Timothy* in the foregoing Verse, that *from a child*

*he had known the Scriptures* by which

he must mean the Body of Writings which the Jews look'd upon

as such, for in that Religion he had been Educated by the Care of

<sup>d</sup> Acts 16. his mother, who was a Jewess <sup>d</sup>.

2. Then it follows in this verse, *All*

*Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*; where the Apostle certainly understands the word Scripture in the

same

same sense which he took it in the  
 Verse before, viz. for that Collection  
 of Writings which the Jews recei-  
 ved as the Word of God. But pray  
 let us hear our Authors Paraphrase  
 ' upon these two Verses, *It is as if* <sup>e</sup> Eng. p.  
*he had said to Timothy, that he ought* <sup>192.</sup>  
*to keep close as he had done hitherto,* <sup>Fr. p.</sup>  
*to the Study of the Old Testament,* <sup>270.</sup>  
*which would instruct him sufficiently in*  
*the way of Salvation, by joyning there-*  
*unto Faith in Christ Jesus: because all*  
*Scripture Inspired, As Is A GREAT*  
**PART OF THE OLD TESTA-**  
**MENT,** *Is profitable for instruction.*  
 I think I may appeal to any In-  
 different Man, whether those words  
 of this Paraphrase, [*As is a great*  
*part of the Old Testament*] be not  
 added meerly to serve the present  
 Turn, without the least Intimation  
 of such a Restriction from the Text  
 it self: and whether the Coherence  
 of these two Verses be not plainly  
 this, "Continue in the Study of the  
 "Old Testament, because all the  
 "Books which that consists of are  
 "Divinely Inspir'd. But I suppose  
 he grounds this Interpretation of his  
 upon that Reading of the Text, for  
 which Grotius 'vouches the Syraick <sup>f</sup>In lo-  
 and Vulgar Translations, *Omnis Scrip-* <sup>cum: &</sup>  
*tura divinitus inspirata utilis est.* <sup>contr.</sup> But Rivetum.  
 it

if we should admit of this Reading, still the Sense will come all to one, and the Words as they lie then, tho they do not in Express terms assert, that all the Old Testament Writings are Divinely Inspir'd, yet they Imply it and take it for granted. For if we read the Greek thus, Πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος ὡφέλιμος ἐστίν, the word θεόπνευστος will be an Explicative Epithet to γραφή, just as if we add the Epithet *Rationalis* to *Homo* in such a Proposition as this, *Homo Rationalis creatus est ad colendum Deum*. In which Proposition tho it be not expressly asserted that *Homo* is *Rationalis*, yet so much is Implied, and if it were not true, 'twould make the whole Proposition false, as *Monsieur Nicol* has observed in his

*g* Pars 2. *Ars Cogitandi* <sup>2</sup>. And just so in the  
*c* 5. Proposition we speak of, γραφή signifies the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in which sense the word is always taken in the New Testament, and θεόπνευστος is added for a fuller Explication of that term. I know *Grotius* <sup>h</sup> will needs have the word γραφή taken here in its General Sense, and signify simply a Book or Writing. But I can't forbear saying, that this gloss is Unworthy of *Grotius*, and 'tis a sign of a Bad Cause, when so Great a Man is fain to be-  
 take

*i* Votum  
 pro Pace,  
 prout  
 citatur,  
 Fr. p. 270.  
 En. p. 193.



take himself to such Pitiful Sophistry, as is to be seen in the fore-cited Place. For he can't produce one Instance in all the New Testament, where the word is used in that Sense: and if he could, yet *δεσπνδς* added to *γενν* sufficiently Restrains the General sense of it, and makes one *Complex Term*, which must signify the same with *ισα γεννατα* in the Verse before, both which Expressions signify the Old Testament, because 'tis a Collection of Inspir'd Writings: and consequently the Phrase it self asserts so much by way of Implication, or else it would be an Improper Expression.

I think it appears from what hath been said, what was the Judgment of Christ and his Apostles concerning the Canon of the Old Testament, and since 'tis certain that they approved the Canon of the Old Testament, as it was received by the Jewish Church of their own time, I can't guess what evidence of Reason can be sufficient to persuade a Christian to Oppose such an Authority. And therefore I can't be of our Authors mind, when he tells us<sup>1</sup>, *He knows; Eng. p. not why we may not doubt of the Books 188. of the Old Testament, as well as of some Fr. p. 267. of the New, the Authority of several of*

*of the Latter having been question'd.* But there is a visible Difference between the Authorities that confirm the Old Testament Canon, and those which give Testimony to the New. To the former Christ and his Apostles bear Witness, whereas the Credit of the Latter depends upon the Consent and Testimony of much the Greater part of the Church in the Ages succeeding that of the Apostles: which tho it be sufficient for any Wise and Unprejudic'd Man to ground his assent upon, yet it hath not that Sacredness and Infallibility in it which the other hath. For those Ages made use only of Humane Means for settling the New Testament Canon, which was sufficient for that purpose, considering the Nearness of those times to the Writing of the Books to which they give Testimony.

*k Fr: p.*

*276.*

*En. p. 102.*

Nor does the name of *Cbetubim*, which the Jews give to those Writings of the Old Testament, which Mr. N. calls in question, at all justify his Opinion. He fancies <sup>k</sup> they were call'd *Cbetubim*, *i. e.* *Simply Writings*, as he interprets it, to signify that they were like other Humane Writings, and had nothing at all of Inspiration in them. But the Jewish

Jewish writers say not one Syllable to confirm this Opinion, that I can find. On the Contrary, by their placing *Daniel* among the *Chetubim*; it appears that they look upon the Writers of that Class to have been Inspir'd, for the Jews all agree that *Daniel* had really the Gift of Prophecy; tho they fanſie it to be in a lower Degree. Further *Maimonides* ſaith expreſſy <sup>1</sup> that they are call'd *Chetubim*, *quia ſcripta ſunt per Spiritum Sanctum*. And tho he reckons that Impulſe which he calls *Spiritus Sanctus*, inferiour to the Degree of Inspiration which *Iſaiab* and the other Prophets properly ſo call'd, had: yet 'tis plain that he looks upon it as a proper kind of Inspiration, for the Inſtances he gives of it are, by his own Confeſſion, real Inſpirations<sup>m</sup>. So that I do not ſee how *Maimonides*, take his Explication altogether, gives any Advantage to this Opinion, tho *Grotius*<sup>n</sup> quote him for it. The Jews do indeed acknowledge a Difference between the Inspiration of the *Hagiographa* and the Prophetic Writings, but this doth not prove them to be no part of the Scripture: for I think there is no body that conſiders the manner of the Spirit's Operation upon the Minds of Inspir'd

Persons

More  
Nevoch.  
P 2. c. 45.

See Mr:  
Smiths  
Diſcourſe  
of Pro-  
phesy.  
c. 7.

n *Votum*  
*pro pace*,  
prouit ci-  
tatur, Fr.  
p. 231.  
Eng. p.  
141.

Persons, but will readily acknowledge that there's no need of the same Degree of Inspiration, to write a History or a Book of Morality, as is requisite to make a Prophet. But concerning the different Degrees of Inspiration, I have discours'd already in several places of this Treatise, and shall have Occasion to speak of it hereafter.

But if the Jewish Division of the Old Testament favour'd Mr. N's Opinion never so much, I do not see any Force at all in the Argument taken from thence : for that Division is not of so early a Date, as to be able to vye with the much Ancienter Opinion concerning the Inspiration of the whole Jewish Canon. St. *Jerom* is the first that I find takes notice of this Division<sup>o</sup> : the placing the Prophet *Daniel* among the *Chetubim* in this Division, besides that there is no shadow of Reason for it, except it be that the Jews bear him a Spight for Prophecying so plainly of our Saviour, discovers that 'tis of no long standing, since 'tis contrary to the Sense of the Ancient Jews. For *Josephus* often calls *Daniel* a Prophet<sup>p</sup>, nay one of the greatest<sup>9</sup> Prophets. And agreeably to the Receiv'd Opinion, our Saviour gives him the same Title.

But

*b* Prolog.  
Galeat.  
Præf. in  
*Daniel*.

*p* Antiq.  
I. c. c. 12.  
9 lb. p.  
353 G.  
Ed. Ge-  
nev.  
*r* Matth.  
24. 15.

But further, the same *Josephus* makes use of another Division of the Old Testament Writings, viz. into the *Books of Moses*, the *Prophetical*, (under which he comprehends the Historical, because they were writ by Prophets, as he with very good Reason supposes) and the *Poetical Books*, as they are commonly call'd, or those which contain *Hymns to God*, and *Precepts of good Life*. Which Division agrees much better with that mention'd by our Saviour, viz. into the *Books of Moses*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*, 24. 44. than the other which the Jews have since that time Invented.

Thus far I have shew'd that Mr. N. by rejecting some of the Receiv'd Books of the Jewish Canon, rejects the Authority of the whole Jewish and Christian Church, nay and of Christ and his Apostles too. What Reasons he has for this we shall see by and by, but at present let us examine what Authority he has to oppose to such a Powerful one, as all these join'd together amount to. And I can find no body that stands by him in this Opinion but *Grotius*, and him he calls in to his Assistance at every Turn. But tho I have a great value for *Grotius's* Judgment, yet I think if it be laid in the Balance to coun-

counterpoise that of Christ and his Apostles, 'twill be found too Light. That great man's Extraordinary Learning and Merits, and particularly his having so well deserv'd of several Parts of Scripture, and given such Light into their true Sense and Design, makes me willing to pass over his Failures, and not be severe upon his Memory for those False Glosses, and some of them deserve a Harder Name, which he has made upon other Books of it. Only I can't but observe, that this Opinion of his, concerning the Old Testament Canon, is very Inconsistent with the Main Design of his *Votum pro Pace*, and those other Treatises where he has asserted it. For the Great Design of those *Projects for Peace*, is to magnify Antiquity, Tradition, and the Authority of the Church, and to shew that Catholick Unity is never to be restor'd, but by submitting all Controversies to the Decision of these three, as so many Arbitrators or Umpires between the different Parties. And yet at the same time when he Pleads for the Authority of the Church, of Antiquity and Tradition, he Rejects those Books which have all the Authority that the Universal Church, Uninterrupted Tradition, and the Consent of all the An-



Ancients, both Jews and Christians can give them.

II. I come now in the Second Place to consider the *Exceptions which our Author makes, against Particular Books of the Old Testament* : and the Books he Excepts against are either *Historical*, or those they commonly call *Poetical*.

As to the Historical Writings I agree with him thus far, that the Sacred Historians were not usually Inspir'd with the things themselves which they relate, nor with the Words by which they Express the things. But I think I have prov'd in the First Chapter " of this Treatise, " P. 33. that a Book may be written by God's Direction, and yet not without the Use of Humane means. And as there is no Reason to think, that God Inspir'd the *Evangelists* with the Knowledge of those Passages of our Saviour's Life, which they themselves were Eye-witnesses of, or might easily learn from those that were so: so 'tis every whit as groundless to suppose, that God Reveal'd those Particulars to the Writers of the Old Testament History, which they could come to the Knowledge of by Consulting the Records and Ancient Monuments, in which these Matters were related.

N

But

But notwithstanding this, 'twill appear that these Books were writ by God's Direction, and Design'd by him for the Use of the Church, if we consider what Mr. N. himself

x Fr. p.1

231.

Eng. p.28.

grants \*, *That they were not writ merely to satisfy our Curiosity, but to be a standing proof of a Providence to After-Ages, to shew us the Care that God always takes of Good People, and the Punishments he inflicts upon the Wicked: to give us Examples of Piety and Vertue, and lastly to inform us of several Matters of Fact, which tend very much to confirm our Faith, as containing many Types and Predictions of our Saviour. To which we may add, that setting aside the Squabbles between F. Simon and his adversaries, about the Scribes and Keepers of the Publick Registers of the Jews, 'tis highly probable, that the Prophets usually writ the Histories of their Kings, and those Books which are so often quoted under the name of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and Israel, and were Annals from whence the Substance of the Books of Kings and Chronicles are taken. For we find a Considerable part of the History of Hezekiah incorporated into Isaiab's Prophecy \*, which is a Strong Presumption that the whole History of that Kings Reign, was*

a Mic. 36,

37, 38,

39.

Re-

Recorded by the same Hand. And indeed so much is expressly asserted  
 2 Chron. 32. 32. So the Acts of David were Recorded by Samuel the Seer, by Nathan the Prophet, and by Gad the Seer <sup>b</sup>. The Acts of Solomon were written in the Book of Nathan the Prophet, in the Prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite, and in the Visions of Iddo the Seer <sup>c</sup>. The History of Rehoboam's Reign was written by Shemaiah the Prophet, and by Iddo the Seer in his Genealogies <sup>d</sup>: the last of these Recorded likewise the acts of Abijah Rehoboam's Son <sup>e</sup>. Jehu the Son of Hanani who was a Prophet <sup>f</sup>, writ the History of Jezebel's death <sup>g</sup>. The Acts of Uzziah were Recorded by the Prophet Isaiah <sup>h</sup>: and those of Manasses among the sayings of the Seers <sup>i</sup>. To the same purpose I think we may most probably Interpret those words of Josephus <sup>k</sup>, which have been so often quoted of late upon this Subject, where he tells us, that the Histories of the Jewish Nation were writ only by Prophets, and therefore they look upon none of them as Authentick, which were writ after Artaxerxes's time, because there was no Clear and Undoubted Succession of Prophets in the following Ages. Nor is Huetius's Objection against this Passage of Josephus of any

Weight, who affirms that *Josephus* Contradicts what he had said, but just before, viz. That the Chief Priests as well as the Prophets, had the Care of Writing the Publick Histories committed to them. But that Learned Man seems not to have attended to the whole Scope and Design of *Josephus* in that place. For that Historian does not say, that the Writing of the Publick Histories, was committed to the Chief Priests as well as the Prophets, but that the Care of the Publick Records

\* τὴν πρὸς τὰς ἡερῶν ἐπιμέλειαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσι καὶ τοῖς προφῆταις τὸ ποιεῖν αὐτοὶς. was committed to them \*. And if we take an Intire view of that Section, we shall find that *Josephus* speaks, not only of the manner how the Histories of Former times were written, but likewise how they were Preserved after they are writ. The Care of writing them was committed to the Prophets, as the other Passage assures us, not Excluding those Priests who had the Gift of Prophecy: the Preserving them he here tells us, was particularly the Business of the Priests, who likewise exactly Preserved the Genealogies of their Nation, and renewed them when the Copies were Impair'd, and in danger to be all lost by Wars and other Accidents, and therefore were lookt upon as the Keepers of the Publick Records. Whence

Whence is it that the same Author usually calls the Holy Writings, *ταῖς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀνακειμέναις γραφαῖς*<sup>m</sup>, *The Books laid up in the Temple under the Custody of the Priests.* Which was agreeable to the Customs of the Neighbouring Countries: for so *Philo Byblius*<sup>n</sup> says of *Sanchuniathon*, that he Collected the *Phœnician Antiquities*, *ἐκ τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἀνακειμένων*, out of the Records laid up in their Temples.

<sup>m</sup> Antiq.  
P. 73. G.  
P. 140. A.  
P. 176. G.

<sup>n</sup> Ap. Eu-  
seb. Præp.  
Evang. l.  
i. c. 9.

But to return to our Subject. From those many Instances I have given, which shew 'twas a Custom among the Jews for the Prophets to be their Historians, we may conclude that the Historical Books of the Old Testament were writ by Men who had the Gift of Prophecy and Inspiration; and tho we suppose them to be but Abridgements of the larger Commentaries of the Prophets, yet they are really of as much Authority as those very Annals would be which were writ by the Prophets themselves, if they were extant. For if an *Epitome* be faithfully made (and I suppose Mr. N. does not question the Fidelity of the Sacred Historians) whatever is contained in it, hath the same Authority and Credibility with the Original Writing. So that if we lay all these things together, the Character of the

Compilers of these Historical Books, the Matter and Design of them, the Authority of the Jewish Canon, and above all that of Christ and his Apostles, these are sufficient Inducements to believe these Books to be Written by God's Direction for the Benefit of the Church. And this I think is enough to give Divine Authority to an Historical Book, tho' neither the Matter nor Words of it be incited by Inspiration.

As for the History of *Esther*, Mr. N. has taken much pains<sup>o</sup>, and shew'd a great deal of Skill in the Rules of *Dramatick Poesy*, and all to prove that this Book looks like a Fiction and a piece of *Tragi-Comedy*. He indeed tells us, that he *affirms nothing in this matter, and does not intend to make himself a Party in the Dispute*. But a man would hardly take so much Pains to make anothers Opinion look probable, if he did not think it so himself. But whatever his own Sentiments be, to shew himself Impartial, and that he is resolv'd not to conceal any thing that may be said, on the other side, he Critically remarks<sup>p</sup> that one Condition, necessary to be observ'd in *Dramatick Writings*, is wanting, viz. *Unity of Time and Place*, which must needs seem a considerable

o Fr. p.  
164, &c.  
Eng. p.  
249.

p Eng. p.  
169.  
Fr. p.  
252.



considerable Objection to so nice a Judge. But besides this, there's another Objection which I confess has more Weight with me, and seems quite to turn the Scales, and make his Remarks appear meer Fancy and Fiction, viz. that the Feast of *Purim* was really observed by the Jews, in memory of the Deliverance recorded in this Book. And 'twill be a hard matter to make me believe that a whole Nation should keep an Anniversary Feast, as 'tis certain they did<sup>a</sup>, without some real Ground for it. And if this was not the true Occasion of it, as he seems to insinuate<sup>b</sup>, I desire either he would prove the Feast to be as very a Fiction, as he supposes the History is, or else inform us how the whole Nation of the Jews came to be so far impos'd upon, as to observe it: for till he does one of these two things, I shall still be of opinion, that the one was a Real Feast, and the other a True History.

But tho' this Play does not succeed, he is resolved not to give over, but try his Skill upon another Subject, and turn the Book of *Job* into a *Tragi-Comedy*<sup>c</sup>. And I confess this Book is made according to the Rules of Poetry, and with all the Beauties of it too as an Ordinary Reader may easily

q 2 Macc.

15. 36.

r Eng. p.

170.

Fr. p.

253.

Fr. p.

234.

Eng. p.

99.

ly discover under all the Disadvantages of a Translation. And therefore methinks our Author, who understands the Rules and *Decorums* of Poetry so well, should not be offended with those Pathetick Strains, that are in the *third Chapter*, and some other places of that Book: for tho we should grant that they would not become a grave Philosophical Discourse, yet I believe he might have found several Speeches in the *Old Tragedies* written with as much Vehemence and Warmth. And yet the severest Philosophers commended those Writings, and look'd upon them as containing very useful Instructions of Life. And I see no Reason why God might not in this as well as other things, suffer the Holy Writers to comply so far with their own Genius, and the Humour which then prevail'd among the grave Sages of the World, as to deliver Great and Weighty Truths in Poetical Numbers and Expressions, both to recommend them to the more Curious and Nice Readers, and to convince the Wise men of the World, who are apt to despise the Plainness of the Scriptures, that there are to be found as Elevated Thoughts, and as Noble Expressions in the Holy Writings,

things, as any *Greece* or *Rome* can  
 boast of: and therefore when they  
 use a plain popular Style, 'tis not out  
 of Necessity but Choice, and because  
 they rather aim at the Instruction of  
 the ignorant, than to gain Applause  
 from the Learned'. But still men <sup>t V. Orig.</sup>  
 perhaps will be ready to say, that <sup>c. Cels. P.</sup>  
 these Expressions may do well in <sup>275, 371,</sup>  
 a Prophane Poem, but are not so <sup>372. Ed.</sup>  
 proper for a Sacred one, and do not <sup>Canr.</sup>  
 become the mouth of a Person emi-  
 nent for Piety and Patience. In  
 answer to which, I would desire  
 the Objectors in the first place to  
 consider that the Substance of the 3<sup>d</sup>  
 Chapter of this Book, which so much  
 offends Mr. N. " when 'tis taken in <sup>u Fr. p.</sup>  
 its Plain Sense, without those Stroaks <sup>275.</sup>  
 of Passion which are meerly Poetical <sup>Eng. p:</sup>  
 Ornaments, is no more but this, <sup>100.</sup>  
 " That 'tis better never to have been  
 " Born than to live in a great deal  
 " of Misery, and that there is this  
 " Benefit in Death, that it puts an  
 " End to the Troubles which are in-  
 " cident to Humane Life. And this  
 seems not unfit to be spoken by a Wise  
 and Good man. In the next place I  
 would desire them to reflect upon those  
 many Excellent Sayings in this Book,  
 which are most Devout Expressions of  
*Job's* Patience, Submission and Resigna-  
 tion

<sup>x</sup> Job 1. tion to the Will of God <sup>a</sup>, and of  
 21.-2. 10. his Trust and Confidence in him <sup>b</sup> in  
 c. 9. 2, 3, the midst of Afflictions, ground-  
 15. ed upon the Testimony of a Good  
 c. 40. 4, 5. Conscience and the Sense of his own  
 c. 42. 3, Integrity <sup>c</sup>. And if they readily ac-  
 &c. knowledge that upon these Accounts  
<sup>y</sup> Ib. c. 13. Job's Behaviour is worthy to be re-  
 15.-14. corded for an Example of Integrity,  
 13, 14. of Sufferings, and of Patience, let  
 15.-19. them withal consider that the other  
 25, 26, parts of the Book which seem more  
 27. liable to Exception, are of use to teach  
<sup>z</sup> c. 23. 3. us, that the best of men are subject  
 &c. to the Passions and Infirmities to  
 c. 29. 31. which Humane Nature is obnoxious,  
 per tot. and are not able to bear up against  
 -27. 3, the First Assaults of Afflictions, and  
 &c. the sudden and sharp Twinges of  
 Pain, till they have recollected their  
 Strength, arm'd themselves with  
 new Vigour and Resolution, and  
 have encourag'd themselves in God  
 and call'd in the Divine Assistance.  
 Thus we find the Spirit of the *Psal-*  
<sup>a</sup> Pf. 73. *mist* stir'd in him at the Consideration  
 2, 3. of the Prosperity of the Wicked <sup>a</sup>,  
 and tempted to that Degree of Im-  
 patience, as to begin to say, *Tw*  
<sup>b</sup> Ib. v. *as in vain to serve God* <sup>b</sup>: but he present-  
 13. 14. ly checks such thoughts as unbecom-  
<sup>c</sup> Ib. v. 15. ing a Religious man <sup>c</sup>. And I que-  
 sition not but God was pleas'd that  
 those

these Expressions of *Job* in which he seems to forget his Character, should be Recorded as well as the Infirmities of other his eminent Servants, on purpose to shew us that they had the Heavenly Treasure of Grace in *Earthen Vessels*, and thereby reach us to cease from valuing *Man*, for wherein is he to be accounted of? and to give God the Glory, and Magnify the Power of his Grace, whose Strength is made perfect in Weakness, and more eminently seen in the midst of Humane Infirmities.

And notwithstanding these Expressions, 'tis no such unaccountable thing as our Author supposes <sup>d</sup>, that <sup>d Fr. p. 275.</sup> the Writer of this Book should bring in God Almighty approving what *Job* had said, and condemning the <sup>Eng. P. 161.</sup> Assertions of his Friends <sup>e</sup>. For we <sup>e Job 42. 7.</sup> find that just before *Job* had begg'd <sup>f Ib. ver. 3, 6.</sup> Pardon for his Rash Speeches in a most Submissive manner. And as to the main of the Dispute, *Job* certainly was in the Right: for the Design of the Book, as our Author <sup>e</sup> himself <sup>g Fr. p. 275.</sup> confesses, is to shew by *Job's* Example, <sup>Eng. p. 100.</sup> that God oftentimes Afflicts Good People, not to punish them for any particular Sin, as if they had deserv'd Afflictions more than others; but simply to try them, and give them Occasion to shew their Virtue. And this is what *Job* maintains through-

*b* Luke  
13. 2.

*i* Job  
8. 8. -c.  
15, 10, 18.  
-20. 4.  
&c. -22.  
15, 16.  
*k* c. 4. 7.  
8, 9, 10,  
11.  
*l* Fr. p.  
275.  
En. p.  
101.  
*m* Job  
7. 20, 21.  
-9. 14, 15.

throughout the Dispute, and wherein he perfectly agrees with what our Saviour saith, on purpose to check Men's Rashness in taking upon them to Interpret God's Judgments, <sup>h</sup> Suppose ye that these Galileans, whose Blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifices, were sinners above all the Galileans; because they suffer'd these things? I tell you Nay. Whereas Job's Friends all along go upon this Principle, that Good Men are always Prosperous, and none are Miserable but the Wicked; and to prove this they Appeal to Experience, the Histories of Former Ages <sup>i</sup>, and the Examples which their own Times furnisht them with <sup>k</sup>. From all which they don't only conclude, as our Author Imperfectly Represents it <sup>l</sup>, that *Job was Afflicted for his sins*, for if this had been all they had maintain'd, *Job* would never have contested the matter with them, for he freely acknowledges his sins, and owns that they deserve Punishment <sup>m</sup>. But that which they contend for is, that *Job* must needs be a Grievous Sinner, and Greater than other Men, however he had made a Shift to conceal his Wickedness from the Eyes of the World, or else he had never been so terribly Afflicted. Nay, *Eliphaz* is so confident that it must



must be some Extraordinary Wicked-  
 ness that had brought down these  
 heavy Judgments upon him, that at  
 last he ventures to give a Catalogue  
 of *Job's Sins* <sup>n</sup>, for which God had <sup>n</sup> Job 22.  
 thus Afflicted him. 'Twas this Un- <sup>5, &c.</sup>  
 charitable Behaviour of theirs pro-  
 voked *Job* to Impatience, more than  
 all the rest of his Afflictions: 'twas  
 upon this account he tells them, that  
*they had Reproached him ten times, had*  
*went his soul, and broke him in pieces*  
*with words* <sup>o</sup>: this makes him so often <sup>o</sup> Job  
 protest his Innocency, and appeal to <sup>19. 2, 3.</sup>  
 God to Judge him, according to the In-  
 tegrity that was in him <sup>p</sup>. And here <sup>pc. 16. 17,</sup>  
 I think *Job's* Friends were very faulty, <sup>21.</sup>  
 not only in pronouncing so rashly <sup>c 27. 5, 6.</sup>  
 concerning the Reasons of Providence <sup>c. 31. per</sup>  
 and of God's Judgments, but likewise <sup>tot.</sup>  
 in passing such Unkind and Uncha- <sup>c. 23. 3,</sup>  
 ritable Censures upon their Friend, <sup>&c.</sup>  
 whereas they ought to have had pity  
 upon him, as he tells them <sup>q</sup>, since the <sup>q c. 19:</sup>  
*Hand of God had toucht him*, and not <sup>21, 22.</sup>  
*persecute him as God*, and add Affliction  
 to the Afflicted. And this their Con-  
 fidence in taking upon them to be  
 Interpreters of God's Judgments, to-  
 gether with their Uncharitable and  
 Inhumane Behaviour toward a Man  
 in Affliction, might justly provoke  
 God's Wrath against them for what  
 they

they had said, when at the same time he pardon'd the Impatient and Undecent Expressions of *Job*, because he could plead the Infirmary of Humane Nature in his own behalf, which is easily provok'd to be Impatient under violent Afflictions, especially where Men persecute those whom God has smitten, whereas *Job's* Friends had no such excuse to alledge for themselves.

But still it may be Demanded, Upon what account we Reckon this Book to be Inspir'd? In Answer to which Question, I shall crave leave to deliver my Opinion freely, but with all due Submission to Better Judgments. I suppose therefore that this Book is not to be reckon'd Inspir'd, upon the account of the Persons who maintain the Dispute in it: and tho I question not, but that they were Extraordinary Men for Piety and Vertue, yet I see no Reason to believe that either *Job* or his Friends spoke every thing which they say, by Inspiration. As to the Latter, the Case is plain, for God himself says, that *they had not spoken of him the thing that is right*. And even *Job* himself, tho he maintain'd the Right side in the Controversie, yet now and then is guilty of too vehement Expostulations with God Almighty, he

r Job  
42. 8.

sc. 7. 11.  
&c. 10. 2.

he stands too much upon his own  
 Justification<sup>t</sup>, and Vindication of his  
 Innocency, and takes upon him to <sup>t</sup> c. 9. 17.  
 Censure the Methods of Providence <sup>-10. 7:</sup>  
 too freely<sup>u</sup>; for which Faults we <sup>-16. 17.</sup>  
 find afterwards he earnestly begs <sup>-13. 23.</sup>  
 God's Pardon, and <sup>w</sup> Repents of them <sup>See c. 33.</sup>  
 in Dust and Ashes. I willingly ac- <sup>9, 10, 11.</sup>  
 knowledge what the Jews themselves <sup>u</sup> c. 9. 22,  
 allow<sup>x</sup> (tho they are very Jealous <sup>23. 19. 7.</sup>  
 of giving this Honour to any that <sup>-23. 13.</sup>  
 are not of their own Nation) that <sup>w</sup> c. 42.  
*Job and his Friends were Prophets among* <sup>3, &c.</sup>  
*the Gentiles.* And indeed there's rea- <sup>x</sup> See Bp.  
 son to grant this: for we find *Eli-* <sup>Patrick's</sup>  
*phaz* himself professes, that he had <sup>Appen-</sup>  
 a Night-vision<sup>y</sup> which was not al- <sup>dix to his</sup>  
 together<sup>z</sup> unusual in those days. <sup>Para-</sup>  
 But *Job* had the Gift of Prophecy <sup>phrase.</sup>  
 in a more Eminent manner, as ap- <sup>y</sup> Job 4.  
 pears, not only from that Famous <sup>13.</sup>  
 Passage of his<sup>a</sup>, *I know that my Re-* <sup>z</sup> See c.  
*deemer lives, &c.* which *St. Jerom* <sup>33. 15,</sup>  
 justly calls, *a Prophecy of the Resur-* <sup>16.</sup>  
*rection*; but also because God spake <sup>a</sup> Job 19.  
 to him by a Voice from Heaven, and <sup>25, 26,</sup>  
 'tis probable he saw a *Shekinah*<sup>d</sup>, or <sup>27.</sup>  
 Visible Appearance of the Divine <sup>b</sup> In lo-  
 Glory. But allowing all this, I see <sup>cum, & in</sup>  
 no proof that the Discourses set down <sup>Ep. ad</sup>  
 in this Book, ought to be lookt <sup>Pam-</sup>  
 upon as spoken by the Spirit of Pro- <sup>mach.</sup>  
 phesy; and therefore the Inspiration <sup>contr. Jo.</sup>  
 of <sup>Hiero-</sup>  
 of <sup>sol.</sup>  
 of <sup>c</sup> Job  
 of <sup>38. 1.</sup>  
 of <sup>d</sup> c. 42. 5.

of the Book it self, seems to me to consist in this, *viz.* As 'tis an Historical account of *Job's* Behaviour before, and under his Afflictions, and of his happy Issue out of them all, together with his reflections, and the discourses he had with his Friends upon that Occasion, written by God's Direction for the Use of his Church, to be an Example of Patience under Sufferings, and a Vindication of God's Providence in permitting the Righteous to be Afflicted. And since by Reason of the Antiquity of the Book, the Author is not certainly known, and Consequently we cannot Argue that 'tis Inspir'd, from the Character of its Author ; the Evidence for its being Inspir'd, or Written by God's Direction for the Use of the Church, must be Resolved into the Authority of the Jewish Canon, as that is confirmed to us by Christ and his Apostles, and this Book particularly Recommended by St. *James* <sup>e</sup>, to the Use of Christians: especially since the Design of it does exactly Answer the Character which St. *Paul* <sup>e</sup> gives of the Old Testament Writings in General; *viz.* *That they were written for our Instruction, that we through Patience and Comfort of. the Scriptures might have Hope.*

*e James*  
5. 11.

*f Rom.*  
15. 4.

And

And thus much I think may suffice, in Answer to Mr. N's Objections against the Book of *Job*. I shall only add, that besides the Powerful Comforts this Book affords to the Afflicted, and the submission it teaches us to yield to God's Will, and to Adore the Unsearchableness of his Judgments, which are the Principal and obvious Designs of this Book, 'tis likewise of Excellent Use upon another account, *viz.* as it gives us a True Idea of *Natural Religion* <sup>e</sup> when <sup>g</sup> See c. it was in its Prime, and as it was practis'd in those early Ages, before the Tradition of the Creation <sup>h</sup> and of the *b. c.* 22. Flood was lost, or the World quite <sup>i</sup> 15, 16. over-run with Idolatry.

I proceed in the next place to consider what our Author alledges against the Book of *Psalms*: His Opinion concerning these in general is, "That there was no need of Inspiration, <sup>i</sup> Fr. p. "but only of Piety and Zeal for the com- <sup>230.</sup> posing them: and he further says, "That <sup>Eng. p.</sup> "any Devout man may easily now-a-days <sup>27.</sup> "praise God in that manner. But all the Pious men that ever were in the Christian Church have been of another mind, and never look'd upon their own Compositions as Equal to the *Psalms*: whereas if the Authors of the *Psalms* were assisted only with

an Ordinary Degree of Piety and Devotion, I cannot see why the members of the Christian Church should not think themselves as well qualified to make Hymns to God, as any of the Jewish that were no more than Pious and Devout men.

- k Ubi sup.* But saith Mr. N. <sup>k</sup> *David never saith,*  
 & Fr. p. *Thus saith the Lord,* as the Prophets  
 277. who speak by God's Authority use  
 Eng. p. to do. Now tho' it be false that *Da-*  
 104. *vid* never uses this Expression, for  
 in several places he uses those very  
 11 Sam. Words, or such as are Equivalent<sup>l</sup>:  
 23. 2. yet if 'twere true, I do not see what  
 Psal. 2. 7. Service 'twould do Mr. N. unless he  
 110. 1. can prove that Praising God by In-  
 see Mark spiration, is the same as Delivering  
 12. 36. a Message from him and Instructing  
 the people in his Name, which is  
 the only proper occasion to usher in  
 what is said with, *Thus saith the Lord*.  
*m* see Mr. Surely Mr. N. thinks that because  
 Smith of we grant Prophecy to be the Highest  
 Prophe- Degree of Inspiration, therefore there  
 cy, c. 7. can be really no other sort. But I  
 am much mistaken if St. Paul was not  
 of another mind when he said with  
 Relation to the Diversity of Spiritual  
 Gifts, *Are all Apostles, are all Prophets* <sup>n</sup>?  
 12. 29. *And If the foot shall say, because I am not*  
*the hand I am not of the body, is it therefore*  
*not of the body* • ? And we may easily ap-  
 ply
- 1b. v.  
 15.



ply the Apostles Reasoning to our present Case on this manner, " If Mr. N. shall say, Because Composing of Psalms and Hymns is not Prophecying, nor bringing a Message from God 'tis not Inspiration, is it therefore not Inspiration? On the contrary 'tis plain that the Holy Writers look'd upon Praising God by Spiritual Songs, when 'twas perform'd by Gifted Persons, as a Real and Distinct sort of Inspiration, and therefore call'd it Prophecying<sup>p</sup>, as that word is taken in a large Sense for Inspiration in General.

And methinks without Descanting so Nicely upon the several Degrees of Divine Inspiration, and *Weighing* God's Gifts *in a Balance*, to try if they can be found *Wanting*, as our Author does: this might be sufficient to convince Men, that God Design'd the Book of Psalms for the Perpetual Use of the Church, *viz.* That the Psalms have been one of the most considerable parts of the Publick Worship, both in the Jewish and Christian Church ever since they were made<sup>a</sup>: they were always us'd at the time of offering the Sacrifices, which was the most solemn part of the Jewish Worship<sup>r</sup>. In the Book of *Ezra* we find this Service was restored af-

p 1 Sam.

10. 5.

1 Chr.

25. 1.

1 Cor.

11 5.

Exod.

15. 22.

See Mr.

Smith of

Prophe-

cy, ch. 7.

and 8.

And Dr.

Hammond

upon St.

Luke 1.

67.

9 See

1 Chr.

6. 31.

r 1 Chr.

16. 40,

41. Ec-

clus. 50.

16, 17,

18.

soon as the Foundation of the Second Temple was laid'. The Evangelists tell us', that our Saviour and his Disciples *Sung a Hymn* after the *Paschal Supper* which Learned Men suppose to have been the same Collection of Psalms, which the Jews used upon that Solemnity. St. Paul Exhorts the Colossians that the *Word of God should dwell richly in them*, and especially recommends the Psalms to their use".

I deny not but in that Inspir'd Age they used several Hymns of their own Composing<sup>w</sup>; yet 'tis certain from the Testimony of many Ancient Writers<sup>x</sup>, that *David's* Psalms still were most in use, and in highest esteem. And this is one Argument of it, *viz.* because all the Hymns Compos'd by the Ancient Christians have been lost time out of mind, except very few, which can be attributed to nothing so probably, as to the Disuse of them, by reason of the more Frequent and Constant Use of the Book of Psalms. And 'tis not likely the Christian Church would have been beholding to the Jewish Temple for their Forms of Worship, (especially when we consider how much more Noble a Subject for Praises and Hymns the Christians had, by the Clear Revelation of the Gospel) if they had not been per-

(Ezr. 3.

11.

+ Matt.

26. 30.

Mark 14,

26.

u Coloss.

3. 16.

w 1 Cor.

14. 26.

Euseb.

H.E. l. 5.

c. 28. &amp;c.

l. 7. c. 30.

x See Dr.

Hamm.

Preface

to his Pa-

raphr.

upon the

Psalms.

perswaded that God design'd the Book of Psalms for the perpetual Use of the Church, to be both a Pattern and Treasure of Devotions, at once to Enlighten our Minds, and Warm our Affections, and teach us to Pray and Praise God *with the Spirit, and with the understanding also*. And if what I have said, prove that this was God's Intent in stirring up Holy Men to make these Excellent Pieces of Devotion, I think 'twill be sufficient to satisfy any Reasonable Man, that the Book of Psalms deserves a place among the Inspir'd Writers, without Nicely determining how great share the Holy Spirit had in making these Composures, and how much is to be ascribed to the Authors own Study and Meditation. Since 'tis very hard in any Case, to Define the manner how God's Grace does Cooperate with Man's Indeavours, and the Spirit, like the Wind to, which our Saviour compares it<sup>y</sup>, does sufficiently disco-<sup>y</sup> John ver it self by its effects, tho we can't 3. 8.

Comprehend the Manner of its Operation. And 'tis no wonder that should not be easily Intelligible by us, who are Ignorant how our own Soul acts within us, and after what manner Outward Objects make an Impression upon it.

O 3

But

Fr. p.  
228.  
Eng. p.  
23.

But saith Mr. N. <sup>2</sup> the *Imprecations* which are found in many of the *Psalms*, can't proceed from the Good and Merciful Spirit of God, and consequently the Authors of those *Psalms* could not be Inspir'd.

This being the only Considerable Objection against the *Psalms*, to take off all Prejudice against the Use of so Excellent a Book, I shall endeavour to give a distinct Answer to it, in these Three particulars.

1. In the First place therefore, I desire it may be observed, that many of those Expressions which seem at first Sight to import *Wishing Mischief and Destruction* to others, do really wish no more harm to them, than that they may be *Disappointed* in their *Enterprises and Undertakings*. For example, that Expression <sup>a</sup>, *Let them be* <sup>b</sup> *Ashamed* [or *Blush*] and <sup>c</sup> *Confounded*, that seek after my Soul, means no more but this, "Let them be fill'd with that shame and Confusion of Face which follows a Disappointment <sup>d</sup>. Now since 'tis lawful to Oppose the Designs of our Enemies, and to use all honest means to prevent their bringing them to pass; it can be no harm to wish and pray that they may be Unsuccessful in their Attempts against us. And in this Sense are all those *Imprecations* in the 35th. Psalm to be understood. 2. Se-

<sup>a</sup> Psal.

70. 2.

יִכְשַׁר.

חִפְרוּ

which is

Synony-

mous

with the

Former,

and ren-

dred by

the

LXX.

ἐντρέπο-

μαι, ἀίσχυν-

νομαι, κα-

ταίσουσιν

μαι, &c.

all which

words

signify

Shame.

<sup>d</sup> see Job

6. 20.

2. Secondly, let it be considered, that all those Expressions which are commonly Translated by way of Imprecation, may be as fitly rendred by way of Prediction: and we may Read, *They shall be Ashamed*, instead of *Let them be Ashamed*. Nay this way of Interpretation is more agreeable to the Letter of the *Hebrew*, where the words are not in the *Imperative* but in the *Future*. And if we take these Expressions in this Sense, then they imply no more than a Denouncing God's Judgments against Wicked Men, if they still persist in their Wickedness. And thus to Denounce the *Terrors of the Lord* against Sinners, is so far from being a piece of Uncharitableness, that 'tis the highest Act of Charity we can shew to them, and the most effectual means to awaken them to a sense of their Condition, and what they are to Expect except they Repent. And if this Interpretation be true, as nothing hinders but it may, then all Mr. N's Objections against the *109th Psalm* vanish immediately; for according to this Interpretation, it only contains a Prediction of the Miseries that were to befall the Person, whoever he was, under whom *Judas* was Represented. And the Denunciation of the Psalmist against his Family,

*Ita Sententia Judaei. vid. Dr. Pocock in Hof. 9. 14. & in Micah 7. 14.*

*Ubi 109th Psalm*

g Isaiah  
13. 16.

h Acts 1.  
16.

i negotiis.

k Deut.  
27.

l Gal.

1. 8.

1 Cor.

16. 20.

m 2 Tim.

4. 14.

mily, will be liable to no other Exceptions than that Prophecy of *Isaiab* against *Babylon*, \* *Their children shall be dash'd in pieces before their eyes, their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.* And *St. Peter* himself seems to have understood this Psalm in no other sense, for he tells us <sup>b</sup> that the *Holy Ghost* [in this Psalm] spoke before or PROPHESED <sup>i</sup> by the mouth of *David* concerning *Judas*. But besides this, it was an Usual way of Speech among the Jews, to threaten or denounce Evils in the form of Imprecation. So the Comminations against those that broke the Law, were utter'd by way of Imprecation, *Cursed be he that <sup>k</sup>, &c.* In like manner Excommunication was denounc'd in the Form of Imprecation, אלהים יהי; from whence the Apostle took that Expression, *Let him be Anathema <sup>l</sup>.* In the same sense we are to understand that Expression of *St. Paul's* concerning *Alexander the Coppersmith*, <sup>m</sup> *The Lord reward him according to his works.* The Reason of all which Expressions is to be taken from the promiscuous use of the Imperative and Future in the *Hebrew*, and a very little Acquaintance with that Language, will furnish a man with several Examples of this kind.

3. But



3. But Thirdly, if we understand these Expressions according to their common Acceptation and the Sense that is usually given of them, and suppose them to imply Wishing evil to the Persons of whom they are spoken, I cannot see but 'tis Lawful, *say our Duty in several Cases to pray to God against our Enemies*, and desire him to Execute his Vengeance upon them: the Lawfulness of this I shall prove in these following Instances.

1. Where 'tis not a Private Quarrel, but one of a Publick Nature, between two different Nations, whether upon a Civil or Religious Account. For in this Case, as it is lawful for the Injur'd Party to endeavour to Right themselves by War, so they may certainly Pray to God that he would give them Success, and overthrow their Enemies: especially if their Attempts be levell'd against the True Religion, for then beside the Reasonableness of Praying to God to *maintain his own Cause*, we may Pray that the Enemies of it may meet with a Remarkable Disappointment, upon another Account too: because it will be a powerful Argument for their Conversion, and to bring them to the Acknowledgment of the Truth. To <sup>n</sup> Psal. which purpose the Psalmist prays, <sup>n</sup> *Fill* 83. 16.  
their

*their faces with shame, O Lord, that they may seek thy Name.* And accordingly those Psalms which were compos'd against the Enemies of the Jewish Church and Nation, may now lawfully be us'd against the Enemies of the True Religion, and of those that profess it: and we find they have all along been applied so in the Christian Church.

2. *'Tis lawful to pray against our Enemies, when they are the Disturbers of the Publick Peace.* For certainly the Charity which we owe to the community lays upon us a Precedent and a higher Obligation than that which we owe to Private Persons, and therefore where these two interfere, the First Obligation must take place, and 'tis not only lawful but our Duty to shew no Kindness to Particular persons, where we cannot do it without Prejudice to the Publick. Or else I do not see how it would be consistent with Christian Charity to punish Malefactors: and surely Wishing Evil is not more contrary to the Rules of Charity than Inflicting it. Now many of the Imprecations which we find in the Psalms, are against the Disturbers of the Publick Peace, for they were not the Enemies of a Private man, but of *David* a King, and one of God's own Appointment too. And certainly in such Cases where men  
are

are bound to the utmost of their Ability, to bring Offenders to the Con-  
dign Punishment, they may every  
whit as lawfully leave them to God's  
Judgment, and desire him to take the  
matter into his own Hand, and Reward  
them according to their Works. Espe-  
cially if we consider that in *David's*  
Case, where a Sovereign Authority  
was Oppress'd and Injur'd by Wicked  
men there no Court upon Earth could  
do him Right, for he that was ap-  
pointed by God to be an *Avenger* and  
*to execute Wrath upon them that do Evil*,  
had this Power taken from him : so that  
in this Case 'twas very fit and just  
for him to Appeal to God, and de-  
sire that he would execute Judgment  
upon obstinate Offenders, who else  
would escape the Hand of Justice.

3. *'Tis lawful to pray to God to send  
down Judgments upon our Enemies, when  
'tis not likely they will be Reform'd by  
Gentler Methods.* Sinners often despise  
the Patience and Long-suffering of  
God, and take Encouragement from  
his Forbearance to go on in their Sins :  
And when nothing will work upon  
them but *Judgment* and *Fiery Indignati-  
on*, 'tis a piece of Charity to pray to  
God to correct them and bring them  
under the Rod, till they know that  
the most High rules over the Children of  
men.

• Psal.  
59. 13.

*men.* Thus the Psalmist prays to God against Hardened Sinners, • *Consume them in thy wrath that they may not be: and let them know that God rules in Jacob, and unto the Ends of the Earth.* This severe dealing with such persons will force them at last to Glorifie God, and others warn'd by their Examples, will be the more careful not to offend in such a manner.

• Exod.  
14. 17.

And this leads me to the 4<sup>th</sup> and Last Instance I shall mention, wherein 'tis lawful to pray against our Enemies, and that is, *When Offenders are in all appearance Incorrigible and past Repentance.* When men have made themselves Uncapable of God's Mercy, 'tis fit that God should be Glorified in them by making them Remarkable Instances of his Justice: and 'tis the Duty of every one that is Zealous of God's Glory, to desire and pray that he may get Honour by the Destruction of Hardned and Incorrigible Sinners, as he did by the Overthrow of Pharaoh: and likewise they ought to Rejoyce when they see it accomplish'd. And surely when Charity has done her work, when Patience and Kindness cannot soften our Enemies, nor Prayers for their Conversion do any Good upon them, it seems very agreeable to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, that

that then we may pray God to execute his Vengeance upon them : as some of the Christians when they saw *Julian the Apostate's* Implacable Rage and inveterate Malice against the Christian Religion, believing him to have Sinn'd the Sin unto Death, pray'd to God for his Destruction, that *all the Kingdoms of the Earth might know that Jesus whom Julian had reproached, was Lord and Christ*<sup>9</sup>. For the Scriptures when they teach us to be Patient and Forgive those that injure us, inforce this Duty upon us by this Argument, that *Vengeance belongs to God, and he will repay*<sup>10</sup> in due time, and do us Justice. Which shews that after we have done what we can to reclaim our Enemies, and have endeavour'd to win them by Kindness, if they still continue Implacable, we may lawfully expect<sup>11</sup> that God will

plead our Cause, and tho we may not Right our selves, yet we may<sup>12</sup> desire him to Interpose and put a stop to the Successes of Wicked men, who grow outrageous and intolerable by Impunity : And we ought to commit our Cause to him, and rest satisfied

*Patientiam docet Vindictæ expectatricem. Ultionem mihi permisisse debuerat, si ipse non prastat, aut si mihi non permittebat, ipse prastaret. Quoniam & discipline interest injuriam vindicari: metu enim Ultionis omnis iniquitas refranatur.* 2 Chron. 24. 22.

with

<sup>9</sup> Greg. Naz. 2. Inveſt. in Ful. p. 123, 124. & Orat. Funebr. in Patr. p. 308. Rom. 12. 19. Tertul. c. Marci- on. l. 4. c. 16. Cum dicit, Mihi vindicam, & ego vindicabo,

u Mnd'is  
 με παρ  
 δικαστῆς  
 ἐκδικεῖται  
 ἔχω ἢ ἐκ  
 δικῶντα  
 με κύειον  
 δὲ ὅν καὶ  
 ταῦτα  
 πάχω.  
 Secundi  
 Presbyte-  
 ri jam  
 morituri  
 verba ap:  
 Athanas.  
 Epist. ad  
 Solitar. p.  
 660.  
 x Prov.  
 25. 21,  
 22.  
 y See Pl.  
 18. 8, 13.  
 -120. 4.  
 -140. 11.  
 z Matth.  
 5. 43.  
 a Deut.  
 28. 63.  
 Pro. 1. 26.  
 Is. 1. 24.  
 Ezek. 5.  
 13.

with this Consideration, That God  
 will in his due time judge us according  
 to our Righteousness". And that passage,  
 which the Apostle in the place above-  
 mention'd quotes out of the Proverbs  
 as a proof of what he says, does imply  
 as much, \* If thine Enemy hunger feed  
 him, if he thirst give him drink, for in  
 so doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire upon  
 his head: i. e. "If thy Kindness does  
 " not reclaim him and make him thy  
 " Friend; but he still persist in his En-  
 " mity, God himself will avenge thy  
 " quarrel, and punish him so much  
 " the more severely. This is the sense  
 of that place, as appears by comparing  
 the Expression of Coals of Fire, with  
 the sense of it in other places of Scrip-  
 ture, where it always signifies God's  
 Vengeance". 'Tis the voice of Na-  
 ture, that Sin ought to be punish'd, and  
 they who do evil should suffer evil.  
 Nay 'tis the Voice of God himself,  
 whom our Saviour proposes to us as  
 the Pattern of Love and Kindness  
 which we ought to imitate: And yet  
 the Scripture often represents him as  
 taking Pleasure and Satisfaction in the  
 Destruction of Incurable Sinners,  
 and rejoicing at their Calamities". In  
 Imitation of which Example the righ-  
 teous are said to Rejoyce when they see  
 God's Vengeance upon Sinners, and  
 wash



*wash their Feet in the Blood of the Ungod-*  
*ly, [as it were trampling upon their*  
*Carcases in a Triumphant manner]*  
*and to glorifie God upon such occa-*  
*sions, saying, Verily there is a Reward*  
*for the Righteous, doubtless there is a God*  
*that judgeth in the Earth* <sup>b</sup>. In like man- <sup>b Ps. 58.</sup>  
*ner, when the Enemies of God's peo-* <sup>10, 11.</sup>  
*ple have fill'd up the measure of their*  
*Iniquities, and sinn'd beyond a possi-*  
*bility of obtaining Pardon, the Pro-*  
*phets denounce God's Judgments a-*  
*gainst them in a triumphant Style,*  
*and at the same time exhort all his Ser-*  
*vants to rejoyce and praise God for*  
*making his Justice manifest. So we*  
*find the Prophet Isaiah breaking forth*  
*into Joy upon such an occasion, 'O Lord, c* <sup>Is. 25, 1.</sup>  
*thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will 2.*  
*praise thy Name. — For thou hast made of*  
*a City a Heap, &c. And to the same*  
*purpose he speaks a little after* <sup>d</sup>. So <sup>d Is. 26. 5.</sup>  
*Jeremy when he foretel's the Destructi-* <sup>6, 11.</sup>  
*on of Babylon, says, ' The Heavens and e* <sup>e Jer. 51.</sup>  
*Earth and all that is therein shall sing for* <sup>48.</sup>  
*joy: and exhorts God's people particu-*  
*larly, to declare in Zion the works of*  
*the Lord their God* <sup>e</sup>. And when My- <sup>f Ver. 10.</sup>  
*stical Babylon falls in the Revelations, the*  
*Apostles and Prophets are exhorted to Re-*  
*joyce over her* <sup>2.</sup> and the heavenly Host <sup>g Rev. 13.</sup>  
*are represented as giving Solemn* <sup>20.</sup>  
*Thanks and Praise to God for execu-*  
*ting*

b Rev. ting his Judgments upon her <sup>h</sup>. And  
 19. 1, &c. although in such general Judgments,  
 See c. 11. Children which are Innocent usually  
 16, 17, suffer as well as the Guilty, yet since  
 18.-15. 2, God has a Right to take away their  
 3. 4.-16. 5. Lives when and in what manner he  
 thinks fit, without the Imputation of  
 Injustice or Cruelty ; and the invol-  
 ving Great and Small, Old and Young  
 in the same common Destruction, adds  
 much to the Dreadfulness and Severity  
 of the Judgment, and consequently  
 makes it more Exemplary, upon this  
 account 'tis lawful to wish with the  
 ; Pl. 109. Psalmist <sup>l</sup>, that God's Judgments may  
 9, &c. come upon the Children of his No-  
 -137. 9. torious and Implacable Enemies: and  
 this not out of a principle of Hatred  
 & Pl. 137. and Revenge, but only out of a Desire  
 9. to see his Judgments made more  
 l Fr. p. manifest hereby to the World. And  
 229. as for the Psalmists pronouncing the  
 Eng. p. Executioners of this Decree of God's  
 25. <sup>m</sup> Jer. 25. *Blessed* <sup>k</sup>, at which Mr. N. is so much  
 9.-27. 6, offended <sup>l</sup>, there are many Expressi-  
 7. 8.- 43. ons like this in the Prophets: where  
 10. -50. they incourage and commend, and  
 14, 21, promise a Reward to those men who  
 26, 29. are to be Executioners of God's Judg-  
 Ezek. 29. ments <sup>m</sup>, and pronounce a Curse <sup>n</sup> up-  
 19. on those who will not joyn in bring-  
 n Jer. 48. ing his Will and Purposes to pass. And  
 10. where the Prophets exhort and in-  
 Judg. 5. courage  
 23.

courage men to fulfill God's Judgments, the Design of such Expressions is only to set forth in a Pathetical and Vehement manner, how desirous the Holy Writers are that such a Work should be accomplish'd, that will so much tend to the Illustrating God's Glory.

I think there is no sort of Imprecations used in the Psalms, but something which has been offer'd in these Three Considerations will reach to, and will be a sufficient Defence and Justification of. Only I will add one brief Remark, for the sake of those who do not converse with the *Originals* or the *Ancient Versions* of the Bible, and that is this; That the word שׁוּמַר which is sometimes Translated *Hell* in the Psalms, and in several other places of the Old Testament, for the most part signifies only the *Grave*, or *State of the Dead*: and ought to have been generally Translated so, to prevent the Misunderstanding of these places. So that when the Psalmist says, *Let p. Psal. 55.*  
*Death come hastily upon them, and let*  
*them go down quick into Hell,* the Expression sounds harsh to a Vulgar ear, and taking it in the most obvious sense of the words can hardly be defended, but it really means no more but this, "Let them suddenly  
p "go

“go down into the Grave, before  
 “they have time to accomplish their  
 “Wicked Designs: the latter words  
 being the same sense with the former,  
 only differently express’d.

Next in order to the Psalms are  
 the *Proverbs*, and therefore I shall in  
 the next place consider the Objections  
 which our Author advances against  
 them. One would think that the  
 Character which the Sacred Histo-  
 ry<sup>a</sup> and all ages have given to *Solo-*  
*mon*, of being indowed by God with  
 an Extraordinary Degree of Wisdom  
 above all other men: together with  
 what he says of himself, that he im-  
 ploy’d this Talent to the Instruction  
 of the people, and gather’d together  
 many *Proverbs*<sup>b</sup> to that end: and be-  
 sides all this, the Authority of the  
 Jewish Canon, especially when ’tis  
 confirm’d by a *Greater than Solomon*,  
 our Saviour CHRIST, and several  
 Passages of this very Book directly  
 quored by his Apostles<sup>c</sup>, and other  
 places plainly alluded<sup>d</sup> to by them:  
 I say, one would be apt to conclude  
 that all these Considerations added  
 to the Intrinsical Worth of the Book  
 it self, might be a sufficient Enduce-  
 ment to look upon it as a Book com-  
 pos’d by God’s Appointment for the  
 Benefit of the Church.

But

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kin.  
 3. 12.

<sup>r</sup> Ecclel.  
 12. 9.

<sup>f</sup> Rom:  
 12. 20.

Hebr. 12.  
 5, 6.

Jam. 4. 6.

1 Pet. 5. 5.

<sup>t</sup> 2 Cor.

8. 21.

1 Pet. 4.

18.

But before I proceed any further upon this Subject, I cannot but reflect by the way upon a Passage of our Author, which the observing that this Book is quoted by the Apostles puts me in mind of, and that is this, He tells us *"That the Apostles never cite the works of Solomon or the Book of Job."* What he says touching the former, I have just now shewed to be manifestly False, and there is as little truth in the latter part of his words: for the Book of *Job* is as formally quoted by St. Paul<sup>w</sup>, as any <sup>w</sup> 1 Cor. Book of the Old Testament, *The Wisdom of the world is Foolishness with God,* 3. 19. **FOR IT IS WRITTEN,** *He taketh the Wise in their own Craftiness.* Which Citation, as 'tis certainly taken out of *Job*<sup>x</sup>, so it shews withal a <sup>x</sup> c. 5. 13. great Deference given by the Apostle to the Authority of the Book from whence 'tis taken. I thought fit just to observe this Mistake of Mr. Ns, tho it be of no great consequence, on purpose to take down the Confidence of this Gentleman a little, and to shew that he is not so exactly vers'd in the Scripture, as a man that undertakes to Criticize upon it with so much Capriciousness, and so little Reverence and Regard to its Authority, ought to be.

y Fr. p.

271.

En. p. 94.

But to return to the Matter in hand. The Sum of the General Charge which our Author has advanc'd against the Divine Authority of the Book of *Proverbs* is, *That they are Moral Sentences which a Good Man may pronounce without Inspiration.* As if a Moral Discourse could not proceed from an Inspir'd Teacher : and if so, I would fain know what our Author thinks of a great part of our Saviour's Discourses, (whom he is pleas'd to grant to have been Inspired) and particularly of his *Sermon upon the Mount*. And if no Book can be writ by God's Direction, but where the matter is such as exceeds the reach of Humane Invention, and is too Sublime to be the Product of our Rational Faculties; then by the same Reason no work must be ascribed to God, but what exceeds the Power of Natural Agents; and so God must be accounted the Author of nothing that happens in the World, but what is purely Miraculous. Now this Argument if it prove any thing at all, it proves not only that this Book is not written by Divine Inspiration, but farther, that no Book of Moral Instructions can be. For Morality is nothing but the *Law of Right Reason, instructing us how to govern our Actions* : and I suppose the *Law*



Law of Reason contains nothing in it above Reason, and Consequently nothing which is above the Capacity of a Wise and Good Man to think or speak : from all which it will follow, by our Authors Principles, that whatever Book contains nothing in it but what is deducible from the Principles of meer Reason, must be purely Humane, and can have nothing Divine, or of the Hand of God in it. But is not Mr. N. sensible that the Corruption of Humane Nature, the Degeneracy of the World, the Uncertainty of Humane Reasoning, and especially the Imperfect Knowledge we have of the Nature of God and our own Souls, have so far Obscur'd a great many branches of this Law of Nature or Reason, that there was need of a more than Ordinary Illumination, to recover some Truths which were in a manner lost to the World, and to set them in a True Light, so as to Convince others of their Certainty and Excellency ? Surely our Author will grant, that the Unity of the God-head is a Truth that is Adequate to Humane Reason, nay a Truth so Evident, that one would wonder that Men of Searching Heads could miss of it ; and yet we find there were very few among the

Heathens that had their Reason so thoroughly purg'd from the prejudices which Education and the Establish'd Religion of the World had infected it with, as to give a full and Clear Assent to this Truth. And I think this is a sufficient Proof that Men may stand in need of a Teacher Divinely Enlightned to discover such Truths to them, as may indeed be deduced from the Principles of Reason when 'tis in its true perfection, but yet are such as few Men's Reason hath arriv'd to, because of the Degeneracy and corruption to which 'tis obnoxious. And many such Truths are to be found in this Book, which tho they are so reasonable that Men can't but assent to them as soon as they hear them, yet 'tis in vain to search for them in the Writings of the Best and Acutest Philosophers. For Instance, we may challenge them to shew such a Wise Instruction in any of their Books as *Solomon* lays down for the foundation of Morality, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom*: Or this, *Trust<sup>a</sup> in the Lord with all thy Heart and lean not to thy own Understanding, In all thy ways acknowledge him*. And indeed thro the whole Book the Duties of Morality are forc'd upon Men from Religious Considera-

Prov.

1. 7.

a Prov.

3. 5, 6.

siderations, <sup>b</sup> and by Arguments taken from the Duty we owe to God, and the Rewards and Punishments we must expect from him, according as we behave our selves. Which makes this Book differ very much from the Moral Writings of the Philosophers, where we shall find little or nothing said concerning our Duty to God, his Authority over us, our Dependance upon him, and the Submission we owe to him, the Methods of Providence, and the Rewards or Punishments of another Life, all which are often insisted upon in this Book For this is a visible Defect in the Writings of the Philosophers, that as they never inforce our Duty by Arguments which are taken from the Principles of Religion: so their dissuasives from Vice are taken from these Topicks, *viz.* That 'tis below the Dignity of Humane Nature, and a Contradiction to Reason, rather than from this Consideration, That 'tis displeasing to God, a Breach of his Law, and an Act of Disobedience which he will Punish. I Confess some Philosophers that lived since the Appearance of Christianity, especially the Emperor *Antoninus*, have very Excellent Sayings concerning God's Providence, and the Submission we owe to him. But I am apt to

*ἂν Ἀγαπῶ  
αἱ πράξεις  
καὶ διατρι-  
βαίης ἁ-  
ποὶ πείσης  
ὅτι τὴν  
πρὸς Θεὸν  
ἡμῶν εὐσε-  
βειαν ἀνα-  
φέρειται. Jo-  
seph. con-  
ter. Appi-  
on. l. 2.  
τῷ λόγῳ  
πολὺ πρὸς  
χοίτης [φι-  
λοσοφῶν]  
ὡς ἂν ἀπὸ  
ἐξ τὴν  
κατὰρχὴν  
ποιούμενοι.  
Aristeas.*

think, that as the Light of the Gospel Diffus'd it self over the World, it in some measure Inlightned the minds even of those who Refus'd to imbrace it, as the Sun gives Light before it reaches our Hemisphere. My meaning is, that the very Account which Inquisitive Men <sup>c</sup> received of the Principles of Christianity helped to Clear up their minds and gave them more distinct Apprehensions of the Principles of Natural Religion than they had before.

*c Literas nostras neque ipsi Supprimimus, & plerique casus ad extraneos transferrunt.*  
Tertull. Apolog. c. 31.

*d Ubi sup.*

*e See Tit. 3. 14. where the Apostle gives the same sort of Advice: f Ubi sup.*

But to return; Beside the Precepts I have already mention'd, there are many Excellent Advices given in the *Proverbs* to all sorts and Degrees of Men, from Princes and Magistrates to the meanest of their Subjects. And 'tis meer Cavilling in this Author to say <sup>d</sup>, That *the Directions about Good Husbandry and House-keeping, Country People know without Inspiration*: As if it were below the Wisdom of an Inspired Teacher to admonish the meanest of their Duty; (as certainly 'tis every Man's to be diligent in his Calling) and encourage them to attend upon it <sup>e</sup>: or as if People had not need to be put in mind of their Duty, altho they knew it before. As little weight is there in what he saith <sup>f</sup> concerning the Caution which this Book so often gives

gives Men against Suretiship, or being Bound for others, as if it amounted to a total forbidding Men the Exercise of this sort of Charity. I grant him this may be in some Cases a very good Act of Charity ; but if we consider it as 'tis generally practis'd, (and *Proverbial Sayings* are to be understood only to hold true in *Most cases*) we shall find such ill Effects of it, that 'tis not only Wise but Religious Advice to warn men against it. Experience tells us that men are often Bound for more than they are able to pay, which is the very Case *Solomon* speaks of<sup>g</sup> in some *Prov.* of those places Mr. N. refers to, and <sup>22.26,27.</sup> so injure the Creditor as well as undo themselves and entail Misery upon their Families, which a Man is bound in Justice as well as Charity to provide for in the first place. And Suretiship when it brings men to Beggary, at the same time exposes them to those dangerous Temptations to sin, which always accompany extreme Want. Upon these accounts Suretiship is oftner the Occasion of a great deal of Injustice and other Wickedness, than the Exercise of Charity. And since these are the usual Consequences of it, 'tis very good Advice to warn men against it, and as proper for this Book as any whatsoever, since

since the Rules of it, as I observ'd just now, are design'd only for *Wise Observations grounded upon Experience*, which are generally True, but are not to be taken so strictly and rigorously as if they never fail'd in any one Instance <sup>h</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> v. Grot.  
in Matth.

12. 30.

<sup>i</sup> Ubi

*Supra.*

<sup>k</sup> Prov.

30.

As to what Mr. N. objects <sup>i</sup> against the Collection of Proverbs ascribed to *Agur* <sup>k</sup>, if I should grant him that they have nothing of Inspiration in them, I do not see how it prejudices the Authority of *Solomon's* Proverbs at all. For *Solomon's* Character will go a great way to Intitle his Proverbs to Inspiration, whereas these are the Sayings of an Unknown Author, who does not pretend to have been bred up in the *Schools of the Prophets* <sup>l</sup>, which were look'd upon as the Nurseries of Inspir'd Writers. I know some Learned Men fancy both this and the 31<sup>st</sup>. Chapter to be sayings of *Solomon*, as well as the foregoing; but as they bring no Proof for what they say, so 'tis altogether unaccountable why *Solomon* should disguise himself under two such different Names, neither of which have the least affinity with his own. Now supposing the two last Chapters of the Proverbs to have been writ by Uncertain Authors, and added to *Solomon's* by some Private hand, and after-

<sup>l</sup> See Bp.  
*Patrick's*  
Paraph.  
upon  
Pro. 30. 3.



terward to have been continued by those that Copied the Holy Writings, as we see *Additions* have been made to *Daniel* and *Esther* in the *Greek Bibles*, and as 'tis probable the *Hellenists* join'd these and the other *Apocryphal* Writings with the Canonical as early as our Saviour's time: Upon this Hypothesis, Mr. N.'s Objections against this part of the Proverbs fall short of the Mark, and do not prejudice the Authority of *Solomon's* Proverbs at all. And this Supposition I think has nothing of Absurdity in it, nor can any Consequences be drawn from hence to weaken the Authority of the Jewish Canon. For if we should suppose these two Chapters to be *Apocryphal*, it will neither follow that we cannot tell what is Canonical and what not, nor that there may have been Additions made to Books which are all of a piece and go all under one and the same Author's name. We can conclude nothing from hence but this, that where-ever we find a Writing, bearing the name of an Unknown Author added to a Book whose Author is known, without any necessary Dependence upon, or Connexion with the Book that goes before or that comes after, in such a Case only, 'twill follow from this Hypothesis, that

that we have no Reason to think both those Writings to be of an Equal Authority. And since this is the only Instance that can be given in all the Old Testament, of a small Writing made an *Appendix* to a greater merely because of the Affinity of the Subject, whatever Hypothesis we admit concerning these Two Chapters, it can be no prejudice to any other part of the Old Testament Canon, because there's no Instance can be given of a like nature.

But whatever I have said upon this Point. I propose only by way of Supposition, and merely out of a Design to shew that whatever Objections Mr. N. thinks he can make against these *Additions* to the *Proverbs*, they do not at all diminish the Authority of *Solomon's Writings*. For indeed the Authority of the Jewish Canon weighs so much with me, and the Jews seem to have been so scrupulous of admitting any Writing into their Canon, without due Examining whether it deserv'd to be receiv'd into it or not, that I must confess I cannot easily bring my self to think there are any *Apocryphals* among the Hebrew Writings of the Old Testament. As for the Greek Writings and Translations, we know that the Helle-

vists

<sup>a</sup>ists were much more Easie and Re-  
 miss as to this matter, and allowed  
 great Liberty to Transcribers and  
 Commentators to make such Addi-  
 tions to the Text, which in their  
 Opinion did tend to Illustrate it. But  
 the Jews being Scrupulous of Adding  
 to, or Diminishing from the Text,  
 even to Superstition, I think it Un-  
 just to conclude that any part of their  
 Canon is of doubtful Authority, from  
 one single Instance which some may  
 fancy looks suspicious. And there-  
 fore taking this *Prophecy* or *Collection*  
<sup>a</sup> of *Agur's* to have the same External <sup>a</sup> *נבואה*  
 Authority with the rest of the Jewish  
 Canon, I cannot see that the Internal  
 Matter of it affords any Reason to  
 the Contrary. For there are many  
 wise Observations and a great deal  
 of good Advice contain'd in it, and  
 his *Prayer to God for a Competency* <sup>b</sup> is <sup>b</sup> *Prov.*  
 a very Excellent one, and is so much <sup>30.8,9.</sup>  
 the more to be valued, because all <sup>c</sup> See  
 the Heathen Philosophers were puzzl'd <sup>c</sup> *Platon.*  
 how to advise others about the mat- <sup>c</sup> *Alcibiad.*  
 ter of their Prayers <sup>c</sup>, what Blessings <sup>2. Juve-</sup>  
 'twas proper to ask of God, and the <sup>nal. Sat.</sup>  
 Vulgar put up very Absurd and Ridicu- <sup>10.</sup>  
 lous Petitions to their Gods <sup>d</sup>. And for <sup>d</sup> *Perf.*  
 those places of this Chapter which are <sup>Sat. 2.</sup>  
 more liable to Exception, if Mr. N. <sup>Horat. 1.</sup>  
 would have consulted what Learned <sup>2. Sat. 3.</sup>  
 Com- <sup>Epist. 16.</sup>  
 1. 1.

Commentators have said upon them, he would not have thought them so Useless and Trifling as he pretends. But our Author himself seems to be at a loss for Objections, since he is willing to take advantage of *Agur's modest Confession of his own Ignorance*<sup>e</sup>. And concludes from thence that he can be a Writer of no Authority. But I believe Mr. N. is the first that ever thought a man's Modesty a sign that he wanted Wisdom, or that Humility render'd any person Unqualified for Receiving the Influences of God's Spirit.

e Prov.  
30. 2.

Our Author objects nothing against *Ecclesiastes* and the *Canticles*, but what has been Objected several times before, and as often Answered: For which reason I shall be more Brief in Refuting him.

'Tis certain that the Design of *Ecclesiastes* is to set forth the Vanity of Humane Life, which *Solomon* does by shewing how Empty and Unsatisfactory all those Ends are which men usually propose to themselves, as the greatest Happiness this World can afford: such as are Knowledge<sup>f</sup>, Pleasure<sup>g</sup>, Honour and Authority<sup>h</sup>, and lastly Riches<sup>i</sup>. Further, he takes notice how men's Ignorance, and the Obscurity in which the Great and Weighty Points concerning the Im-

f Eccles.

1.

g Ch. 2.

h Ch. 3.

and 4.

i Ch. 5.

and 6.

mor-

mortality of the Soul, a Future State,  
 and the Methods of Providence are  
 Involved, do occasion a great deal  
 of Misery and Trouble to Mankind.  
 Whilst Ill men take advantage of the  
 Difficulties which may be objected  
 against these Truths, and from thence  
 conclude that there's no Providence  
 nor Future Judgment, and thereby  
 harden themselves in <sup>k</sup> Wickedness, <sup>Ch. 8.</sup>  
 or give themselves up to Sensuality, <sup>11, 14.</sup>  
 and say, *Let us eat and drink for to mor- ch. 9. 3.*  
*row we shall die* <sup>1</sup>. And even good men <sup>Ch. 3.</sup>  
 are now and then in a great Perplexity <sup>18, &c.</sup>  
 about these things, by reason of the  
 Obscurity and Difficulties with which  
 they are beset, and begin to doubt  
 and stagger in their Faith <sup>m</sup>. If men <sup>m Ch. 1.</sup>  
 would therefore view the Scope and <sup>13. 8. 16,</sup>  
 Design of the whole Book, and not <sup>17.</sup>  
 take it by Piece-meal or examine each  
 Sentence apart, they might easily see,  
 that when the Author proposes Doubts  
 concerning Providence and a Future  
 State, he does not speak his own  
 Sense: for in several places he plainly <sup>n Ch. 3.</sup>  
 asserts God's Ordering and Disposing <sup>11, 14.</sup>  
 of all things <sup>n</sup>, and speaks of another <sup>7. 13.</sup>  
 Life and a Future Judgment, with <sup>9. 1.</sup>  
 the greatest Clearness and Assurance <sup>11. 5. 1</sup>  
 of any of the Canonical Writers of the <sup>o Ch. 3.</sup>  
 Old Testament <sup>17.</sup>. And therefore the <sup>11. 9.</sup>  
 Design of those other places which <sup>12. 7. 14.</sup>  
 seem

seem at first to contradict these is only to shew that the Obscurity of these Great Articles of Faith, had often fill'd his own and other good Men's minds with Perplexing thoughts, and that the Generality of Men took Incouragement from thence to mind only Sensual Pleasures, and make no Conscience of Injuring and Oppressing others. So that the uncertainty and Imperfection of Humane Knowledge as to these things, was a great Ingredient in the Vanities of Life: and one of those *sore Travels which God hath given to the Sons of Men, to be exercised therewith*<sup>p</sup>. And we may observe that when he mentions the Doubts concerning the Immortality of the Soul, he introduces them with this Preface, <sup>q</sup> *I said in my heart* על-רצרת בני האדם, which may very properly be rendred, *According to the words or way of speaking used among the Generality of Men*: And 'tis the very same Phrase as κατὰ ἀνθρώπων λόγῳ, his which St. Paul uses<sup>r</sup> in a like Case, where he does not speak own Sense, but sets down an Inference which Wicked Men would be apt to make from what he had said.

But if any desire further satisfaction concerning this Book or the *Song of Solomon*, I must refer them to that

<sup>p</sup> Eccles.  
1. 13.

<sup>q</sup> c. 3. 18.

<sup>r</sup> Rom.  
3. 5.



that Excellent *Commentary* which the *Preface*  
*Reverend and Learned Bishop Patrick* *Pfal.* 45.  
 has Publish'd upon these two Books, *II.* 54. 5.  
 where he has with great Clearness *-62. 4. 5.*  
 explain'd the Sense and Design of *Jer.* 3. 14.  
 them both, and particularly as to the *-31. 32.*  
 Latter, has shewed, how fitly the *Hof.* 2.  
*Mystical Union between Christ and his* *2. 7. 16.*  
*Church*, is Represented in it under the *Ezek.* 16.  
 Persons of a *Bridegroom* and *Bride*: *" II.* 57.  
 that Allegory being agreeable to the *7. 8.*  
 Notions of all the Prophetical Wri- *Jer.* 3.  
 ters of the Old Testament, who con- *1. &c.*  
 stantly express God's being in Co- *Ezek.* 16.  
 venant with the Jews by his being *15. &c. -c.*  
*Married*, and a *Husband* to them; *23. Hof.*  
 and in pursuance of the same Meta- *c. 1. & 2.*  
 phor, reprove their Idolatry under *x Matt.*  
 the names of *Adultery*, *Fornication*, *22. 2.*  
 and going a *Whoring* after other Gods: *" Joh.* 3.  
 and the same Metaphor is alluded to *28. 29.*  
 by Christ and his Apostles in the *2 Cor.* 11.  
 New Testament\*. We may likewise *2. Eph.* 5.  
 conclude, that a *Collective Body* or *Soc-* *31. 32.*  
*cisty* must be represented by the *Spouse*, *Rev.* 19.  
 from the Comparisons to which she *7. -14. 4.*  
 is resembled *viz.* to a *Company* of *Hor-* *\* συμφορ.*  
*ses*, to the *City Jerusalem*, and an *Army*, *lxx. Interp.*  
 which are fit Illustrations of the *compare*  
 Beauty and Comely Order of a *Church*, *Cant.* 4.  
 but can't well be applied to a single *10, 11, 12.*  
 Person. These and several other par- *with Rev.*  
 ticulars, which discover the True De- *21. 2. -22.*  
 sign *17.*  
 sign *Cant.* 1.  
 sign *9.*  
 sign *c. 6. 4.*  
 sign *13.*

sign of this *Divine Pastoral*, are observed and Explained by the same Reverend and Excellent Author with so much Learning and Critical Exactness, and do so fully Vindicate this Book, from the Rash Censures of those who have doubted of its Authority, and from the Prophane Interpretations which some Wanton Fancies have applied to it, that 'twould be Unpardonable Presumption for me to think I can add any thing upon this Subject, to that Great Man's Judicious and Accomplisht Labours.

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## T H E C O N C L U S I O N .

ANd now I have finish'd my Undertaking, and have given a particular Answer to all the Arguments Mr. N. has advanc'd against the *Divine Inspiration of the holy Scriptures*. I have not to my Knowledge pass'd by any thing which is of Weight in any of the Letters, nor dissembled the True Force of any of the Objections contain'd in them. And upon the whole matter it appears that the Main  
Strength

Strength of the Book may be Compriz'd in this one Argument, viz. *That Book can't be of Divine Authority, nor Written by God's Direction, where there are any Marks of Humane Industry, and of Men's making use of their Natural Talents of Memory or Invention in the Composition.* The Falseness of which Assertion I have shewed in several places of the Foregoing Discourse: and at present I shall only make this further Remark upon it, for a Conclusion of the whole Discourse; viz. That at the same Rate of Arguing a Man might prove that God had no hand in Governing the Ordinary Course of this World by his *Providence*, nor Fitting Men for the Next by his *Grace*. For we see nothing brought to pass in the World without the help of Natural Agents, and God requires Mens to *work out their Salvation* with as much Care and Diligence, as if he gave no Grace at all. And in either Case 'tis very hard to Assign just how far Nature goes, or exactly to Define how much Second Causes contribute toward the Production of the Effect, and how much is to be ascribed to God. I would not be misunderstood, as if I thought the Writing of the Scriptures owing to God's Providence, no otherwise than as other common

Events in the World are, or that there was no greater Degree of Divine Grace and Assistance went to the Composing of them, than does to the making other Pious and Good Books. I hope I have made it appear that these Books were design'd by God for *the Perpetual Use and Instruction of the Church, to be a First Rule of Faith and Manners*, and the Standard by which all other Doctrines and Practices are to be Tried. And then I think 'tis to reflect both upon the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to suppose that he did not assist the Holy Writers with such a Degree of Infallibility, as was requisite to make their Writings serviceable to that End. But still I believe that the Extraordinary and the Ordinary Means of Grace agree in this, that in both Cases God never affords Supernatural Assistance to do that which Natural Causes are sufficient to Effect of themselves: And that his Constant Method is to let Natural Means go as far as they can, and then supply the rest himself.

And if Mr. N. had well considered this, he might have spar'd his pains in Writing this Treatise. Or however Innocent his Intentions might be in Writing it, yet it was not so Prudently done in the Editor to Publish it, when

when at the same time he was sensible<sup>a</sup> that *very Ill Consequences might be drawn from it.* And he could not but think that Bad Men would greedily catch at them, and make what advantage they could of them. I am as little for an *Implicit Faith*, or *Building Sacred Truths upon False Principles* as he or his Interpreter<sup>b</sup>:<sup>f</sup> but yet I think a Man ought to be well Advis'd, and very sure he is in the Right before he ventures to *Unsettle Foundations.* I find the Publisher himself is of the mind, that *all Truths are not to be spoken at all times; especially when 'tis likely they will do more Harm than Good*: and therefore I wonder he should set such a value upon that which at best is but a Probability, (for he himself<sup>d</sup> looks upon this Hypothesis to be no more) as to venture the Publishing it at the Expence of the most Important Truths. And tho we should suppose the Principles Mr. N. has advanc'd in his Treatise to be True, yet I can't look upon them to be of such Importance, but that 'twere better the Publick should be deprived of the Advantage it might draw from the Knowledge of such Truths, than to be visibly Expos'd to the Danger of Abusing them so lamentably as it will be apt to do: which the Publisher tells

a v. Fr. p.

245, 247.

Eng. p.

51, 54.

b Eng.

Pref. p. 7.

c Eng.

123, 124.

Fr. p. 219.

d v. Fr. p.

245, 221.

Eng. p.

51, 127.

e Fr. p.  
218.  
Eng. p.  
122.

f Fr. p.  
221.

Eng. p. 126.

g Fr. p.  
248. 253.

Eng. p.  
164. 170.

h Fr. p.  
274. 285.

Eng. p.  
99. 116.

i Fr. p.  
228.

Eng. p.  
24.

k Fr. p.  
275.

Eng. p.  
100.

l Fr. p.  
273.

Eng. p.  
96.

m Fr. p.  
275.

Eng. p.  
201.

us \* was the Opinion of several Learned Men concerning these Papers. And I don't see any thing that he has said to the contrary, hath force enough in it to make these Gentlemen alter their minds. For as to what he <sup>f</sup> alledges, that *these Principles may be made use of to overthrow the Pretences of Libertines*; tho I grant 'twere better men should believe as much of the Scriptures as Mr. N. does, than none at all, yet I conceive it a very improper way to go about to convince Infidels of the Authority of the Bible by telling them that several of those Writings which go under that Name, are meer *Fiction and Romance* <sup>g</sup>, and *Pieces of Wit and Fancy* <sup>h</sup>: that other things in that Book are writ *with Excessive Choler, and Impatience* <sup>i</sup>, and *unworthy not only of a Pious man, but even of an Honest and Wise Heathen* <sup>k</sup>. Nay that some of the Writings that go under the Venerable Name of God's Word *maintain the Principles of Libertinism it self* <sup>l</sup>, and have *Expressions in them very like Blasphemies* <sup>m</sup>. These and such-like goodly Titles does this Author bestow upon several of those Writings which Christ and his Apostles, and the whole Christian Church ever since, have look'd upon as the Word of God, and *written for our Instruction*. Certainly



tainly this Method, to use Mr. N's.  
own words<sup>n</sup>, *Instead of converting Li-* <sup>n Fr. p.</sup>  
*bertines, does but excite their Raillery, and* <sup>281.</sup>  
*confirm them in their Impiety.* <sup>Eng. p.</sup>

At least if the Publishers of such <sup>100.</sup>  
Tracts as this, have a mind to convince the World that they design no Harm to Religion, they ought to Publish them in the *Learned Language*, that none but Scholars may Read them. For the Publishing such Writings in *Vulgar Languages* proves a snare to Men of *Unsettled Heads* and *Vicious Inclinations*. They have not Capacity enough to Examine the true Merits of the Cause, or to weigh Exactly what can be said on both sides, in such Nice and Difficult Subjects: and therefore they presently run away with any thing that seems to make against Religion, without considering what can be said on the other side, because they are glad to find any Pretence or Plea for Sin and Wickedness.

But if the *Editor* had no good reason for Publishing this Treatise, I am sure the *Translator* hath much less for Printing it in *English*. He himself <sup>o Engl.</sup>  
acknowledges that this Treatise is not <sup>Pref. at</sup>  
*Calculated for the use of simple-hearted* <sup>the End.</sup>  
*Pious persons*, nor consequently the Translation: tho one would think

an *English* Translation were made for the use of Ordinary *English* Readers. But since he tells us these Discourses were not design'd for Plain, Honest, Illiterate Christians, I cannot imagine why they were Translated, except it were, as some other *Precious Treatises* have been of late, for the Benefit of Dishonest, Illiterate Atheists ; and to furnish those *Wits* with Objections against the Scriptures, who set up for Advocates of Irreligion, and value themselves for Reasoning out of the common Road, and not blindly following the Dictates of others ; and yet for all their mighty Boasts, can only Repeat the Arguments which other Men put into their Mouths, and those too must be *Construed* into *English*, before they can Understand them.

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*A Brief Review of the whole Argument.*

I. **T**He Scripture must be Divinely Inspired to make it the Foundation for a Divine Faith.

II. The Use of Inspiration is chiefly to supply the Defects, and Prevent the Mistakes to which the Holy Writers were naturally liable.

III. From

III. From hence it follows that there are Different Degrees of Inspiration in the Holy Writings, according as the Nature of the things which are treated of, is more or less Adequate to the Natural Faculties of the Writers.

IV. There is no Reason to think that the Spirit did ordinarily dictate the very Words and Phrases to any of the Inspired Writers : Tho' it is not to be doubted but that the Holy Ghost prevented their Expressing themselves in any way unsuitable to the Subject Matter, or otherwise liable to Exception.

V. The Proof of Divine Inspiration depends either upon the Matter of the Writing it self, the Inspiration of the Writer, or the Testimony of some other Inspired Person.

VI. Both the Matter it self, and the Authority of the Writers, prove the Inspiration of the Prophetical Writings.

VII. The subject Matter likewise of the *Psalms*, prove them to be Inspired Writings ; because Praising God in *Psalms* and *Hymns*, is reckoned among the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit in Scripture, and honoured with the Name of Prophecy.

VIII. It is reasonable to grant, that Persons who were often under the Extraordi-

traordinary Influence and Direction of God's Spirit, were so especially in their Composing those Writings which were design'd by God for the Perpetual use of the Church.

IX. From hence the Authority of *David's* and *Solomon's* Writings may be proved: The former being called a Prophet in Scripture, and the Latter said to be Endowed with Wisdom from above.

X. From hence likewise the Authority of the Historical Writings of the Old Testament may be made out, if the Prophets were the Compilers of them, which there is good Reason to believe.

XI. The Holy Spirit Incited all the sacred Historians to undertake that Employment, and directed them what particulars to mention; but the Evangelists had this Prerogative above the rest, That the Spirit did recall to their Memories the several passages of our Saviours Life and Doctrine, and gave them a Clearer View of each particular than they ever had before.

XII. The Writings of the Apostles have an undoubted Title to Inspiration, because the Writers were under the Constant Influence and Direction of the Holy Spirit, in every thing which concern'd the good of the Church.

XIII. Where

XIII. Where an Inspired Person gives Testimony to any Writing as Divinely Inspired, that is a sufficient Testimony of its Inspiration. Thus the Divine Authority of the Old Testament in General, is proved from the Testimony of Christ and his Apostles, who received the Jewish Canon of Scripture as the Word of God.

XIV. Whatsoever Writing God design'd for the Perpetual Use of his Church, is thereby distinguish'd from all Writings purely Human; and must be supposed to be Writ with such a Degree of Divine Assistance, as is sufficient to make an unerring Rule and Guide to Believers.

*Addenda ad page 24. line 3.*

AND even before that time, *Mar-*  
*cion* corrupted St. Luke's Gospel: *p Epiph.*  
 a plain proof that at the *beginning* of the *Hæres. 42.*  
*Second Century* that Book was general- *q see Bp.*  
 ly known in the Church. For *Marcion* *Pearson*  
*came to Rome* just after the *de suc-*  
 Death of Pope *Hyginus* *p*, *i. e.* about *cess. Rom.*  
 the year *q* 127. where being rejected *diff.*  
 by the Church, he not long after *2. c. 8.*  
 broached his Heresie. And that the *r About*  
 other Three Gospels were then re- *the year*  
 puted of Equal Authority with St. *134. See*  
*Bp. Pear-*  
*Luke's son, ibid.*

*Luke's*, appears from several places in *Tertullian's* Books against *Marcion* : and particularly from the Beginning of his 4 Book, where he asserts the Authority of all the Four Gospels: and gives a kind of preference to those of *St. Matthew* and *St. John*, in opposition to *Marcion*, who singled out that of *St. Luke* without taking any notice of the rest. From whence it appears that in *Tertullian's* opinion, (and he was a Competent Witness of the Times so near his own) the Four Gospels were generally received in the Church, before *Marcion's* Heresie was heard of. And if we consider further that the same Heretick likewise patcht up a Book out of *St. Paul's* Epistles for the Use of his Disciples, we may certainly conclude that the Greatest part of the Apostolical Writings were generally received in the Church, at or before the beginning of the Second Century, though there is no necessity of maintaining that the New Testament Canon, *i. e.* such a Determinate number of Books, was agreed upon so soon, And as I take it, the late Date of the New Testament Canon as such, *i. e.* as consisting of such a Number of Books neither more nor less, is all that the Learned *Mr. Dodwell* asserts in that Passage of his *Dissertations upon Ireneus*, which *Mr. Toland*

j See  
Epiph.  
ubi supr.



land has lately produced with so much Assurance. This plainly appears by the Sentence immediately preceeding that where his Quotation begins : which I confess was not for Mr. Toland's purpose to lay before his Readers, but is very much to the purpose for the clearing the True Meaning and Design of that Learned and Excellent Person:

Page 55 line, 7. add as follows.

**V** Hat I there affirm, that the Apostles thought the Day of Judgment might possibly be in their own time, is chiefly grounded upon those words of St. Paul <sup>1</sup>, *In this [Earthly Tabernacle] we groan Earnestly desiring to be* <sup>2</sup> *cloath'd upon with our House which is* <sup>3</sup> *from Heaven.* Not that we would be Uncloath'd, but Cloath'd upon, that Mortality might be Swallowed up of Life. Where the Expression of being Cloath'd upon with our Heavenly House, does plainly mean the putting on Immortality without being Develsted of these Bodies by Death <sup>4</sup>, as the Apostle himself explains it by *Mortality's being Swallowed up of Life* : i. e. being immediately translated into an Immortal State without first passing thro the Regions of Death. For the fuller explaining of his meaning, the Apostle adds by way of Parenthesis, *If we shall be found* [at

[at Christ's coming] *Cloath'd, i. e.* in these Bodies, *not Naked, i. e.* Devested of them by Death. Which words imply that St. Paul thought this might possibly be the Case of some persons then alive: tho with regard to the Common Fate of Mankind in general, and to his own Circumstances in particular, who continually expected to be *delivered to death for Jesus sake*, as he speaks in the foregoing

α vers. 11.

2 ενδύμην

σας εν

τῷ σώματι

7ος.

ch. 5. 8,

see vers.

6; & 9:

\* Chapter, he calls leaving this World<sup>2</sup>, going out of, or *being absent from the body*, in the following Verses.

This I take to be the plain and Natural sense of this Text: and there are many others in the New Testament that favour this Interpretation; several of which I refer to in the Margin of the page above mention'd. Among others I mention'd 1 *Thess.* 4. 14. (or rather 15.) in my Former Edition. But I made this Reference only with Regard to that Expression, *We which are alive*, which I had observ'd was the same which the Apostle uses, 1 *Cor.* 15. 51. when speaking upon the same subject he saith; *We shall not all Sleep, &c.* Not that I imagined the whole Sentence was spoken purely by Conjecture, as

a p. 139.

Mr. La Moth<sup>a</sup> seems to understand me. For I always thought that the

Doctrine

Doctrine there <sup>b</sup> delivered, viz. That <sup>b</sup> i Thess. those who are alive at Christ's coming, 4. 15. should not prevent them which are a sleep, or be glorified before them, was a Truth Revealed by God unto St. Paul, as he there expressly affirms. Altho I supposed that in his manner of delivering it, he might allude to an Opinion, then commonly received.

The greatest Objection against this Notion, in my judgment, is what Mr. La Moth<sup>e</sup> mentions, and Mr. Mede<sup>d</sup> c p. 135. urged before him : viz. that the Apostles, and particularly St. Paul, had several Revelations concerning the Future State of the Church, viz. concerning the times of Antichrist, the coming in of the Fulness of the Gentiles, and the Restauration of the Jews : all which Events were to be fulfill'd before Christ's coming to Judgment. And it was not to be expected, that such Transactions should be both begun and finished, within the Compass of that Age, wherein they themselves lived.

But to this Objection it may be Replied, that the Apostles had only a General View of these things afforded to them, without any distinct Revelation of the particular manner, how they were to be brought to pass ; and the several Advances which were

to usher them in : This was a Favour Reserved for St. *John*, the Beloved Disciple. From whence we may gather, that the Apostles might not be able to judge how long time would be taken up in bringing these things to pass. Just as we find the Prophet *Daniel*, after he had seen the Vision of Antichrist, <sup>e</sup> was still uncertain how long time was allotted for the fulfilling it, till that was made known <sup>f</sup> to him <sup>i</sup> by a distinct Revelation. And <sup>j</sup> 13, & 14. again Chapt. 12. after a fuller Revelation of the same matter, we find him asking this Question, <sup>g</sup> *How long shall it be to the End of these things?* And thereupon receiving a new Information of the Duration, and continuance of the times of Antichrist, which he was ignorant of before.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 8,  
9, &c.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid. vers.  
13, & 14.

<sup>g</sup> Dan.  
12. 6.

But after all that I have said, I will not peremptorily maintain this Assertion: and my chief Design in mentioning it was to shew, that Granting this Opinion to be true, yet it did not at all Reflect upon the Inspiration of the Apostles. Whereby I endeavour'd to prevent the Inferring from thence any Conclusions, disadvantageous to the Authority of the Apostolical Writings.







